PART II

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CHAPTER I.

THE SLAVE TRADE.

The slave trade! Nobody is ignorant of the significance of this word, which should never have found a place in human language. This abominable traffic, for a long time practised to the profit of the European nations which possessed colonies beyond the sea, has been already forbidden for many years. Meanwhile it is always going on a large scale, and principally in Central Africa. Even in this nineteenth century the signature of a few States, calling themselves Christians, are still missing from the Act for the Abolition of Slavery.

We might believe that the trade is no longer carried on; that this buying and this selling of human creatures has ceased: it is not so, and that is what the reader must know if he wishes to become more deeply interested in the second part of this history. He must learn what these men-hunts actually are still, these hunts which threaten

to depopulate a whole continent for the maintenance of a few slave colonies; where and how these barbarous captures are executed; how much blood they cost; how they provoke incendiarism and pillage; finally, for whose profit they are made.

It is in the fifteenth century only that we see the trade in blacks carried on for the first time. Behold under what circumstances it was established:

The Mussulmans, after being expelled from Spain, took refuge beyond the Strait on the coast of Africa. The Portuguese, who then occupied that part of the coast, pursued them with fury. A certain number of those fugitives were made prisoners and brought back to Portugal. Reduced to slavery, they constituted the first nucleus of African slaves which has been formed in Western Europe since the Christian Era.

But those Mussulmans belonged, for the most part, to rich families, who wished to buy them back for gold. The Portuguese refused to accept a ransom, however large it might be. They had only to make foreign gold. What they lacked were the arms so indispensable then for the work of the growing colonies, and, to say it all, the arms of the slave.

The Mussulman families, being unable to buy back their captive relatives, then offered to exchange them for a much larger number of black Africans, whom it was only too easy to carry off. The offer

was accepted by the Portuguese, who found that exchange to their advantage, and thus the slave trade was founded in Europe.

Toward the end of the sixteenth century this odious traffic was generally admitted, and it was not repugnant to the still barbarous manners. All the States protected it so as to colonize more rapidly and more surely the isles of the New World. In fact, the slaves of black origin could resist the climate, where the badly acclimated whites, still unfit to support the heat of intertropical climates, would have perished by thousands. The transport of negroes to the American colonies was then carried on regularly by special vessels, and this branch of transatlantic commerce led to the creation of important stations on different points of the African coast. The "merchandise" cost little in the country of production, and the returns were considerable.

But, necessary as was the foundation of the colonies beyond the sea from all points of view, it could not justify those markets for human flesh. Generous voices soon made themselves heard, which protested against the trade in blacks, and demanded from the European governments a decree of abolition in the name of the principles of humanity.

In 1751, the Quakers put themselves at the head of the abolition movement, even in the heart of that North America where, a hundred years later, the War of Secession was to burst forth, to which this question of slavery was not a foreign one. Different States in the

North--Virginia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania--decreed the abolition of the slave trade, and freed the slaves brought to their territories at great expense.

But the campaign commenced by the Quakers did not limit itself to the northern provinces of the New World. Slaveholders were warmly attacked beyond the Atlantic. France and England, more particularly, recruited partisans for this just cause. "Let the colonies perish rather than a principle!" Such was the generous command which resounded through all the Old World, and, in spite of the great political and commercial interests engaged in the question, it was effectively transmitted through Europe.

The impetus was given. In 1807, England abolished the slave-trade in her colonies, and France followed her example in 1814. The two powerful nations exchanged a treaty on this subject--a treaty confirmed by Napoleon during the Hundred Days.

However, that was as yet only a purely theoretical declaration. The slave-ships did not cease to cross the seas, and to dispose of their "ebony cargoes" in colonial ports.

More practical measures must be taken in order to put an end to this commerce. The United States, in 1820, and England, in 1824, declared the slave trade an act of piracy, and those who practised it pirates. As such, they drew on themselves the penalty of death, and they were pursued to the end. France soon adhered to the new treaty; but the

States of South America, and the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, did not join in the Act of Abolition. The exportation of blacks then continued to their profit, notwithstanding the right of search generally recognized, which was limited to the verification of the flag of suspicious vessels.

Meanwhile, the new Law of Abolition had not a retroactive effect. No more new slaves were made, but the old ones had not yet recovered their liberty.

It was under those circumstances that England set an example. In May, 1833, a general declaration emancipated all the blacks in the colonies of Great Britain, and in August, 1838, six hundred and seventy thousand slaves were declared free.

Ten years later, in 1848, the Republic emancipated the slaves of the French colonies, say about two hundred and sixty thousand blacks. In 1861, the war which broke out between the Federals and Confederates, of the United States, finishing the work of emancipation, extended it to all North America.

The three great powers had then accomplished this work of humanity. At the present hour, the trade is no longer carried on, except for the benefit of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, and to satisfy the wants of the populations of the Orient, Turks, or Arabs. Brazil, if she has not yet restored her old slaves to liberty, at least no longer receives new ones, and the children of the blacks are born free there.

It is in the interior of Africa, in the prosecution of those bloody wars, waged by the African chiefs among themselves for this man-hunt, that entire tribes are reduced to slavery. Two opposite directions are then given to the caravans: one to the west, toward the Portuguese colony of Angola; the other to the east, on the Mozambique. Of these unfortunate beings, of whom only a small portion arrive at their destination, some are exported, it may be to Cuba, it may be to Madagascar; others to the Arab or Turkish provinces of Asia, to Mecca, or to Muscat. The English and French cruisers can only prevent this traffic to a small extent, as it is so difficult to obtain an effective surveillance over such far-extended coasts.

But the figures of these odious exportations, are they still considerable?

Yes! The number of slaves who arrive at the coast is estimated at not less than eighty thousand; and this number, it appears, only represents the tenth of natives massacred.

After these dreadful butcheries the devastated fields are deserted, the burnt villages are without inhabitants, the rivers carry down dead bodies, deer occupy the country. Livingstone, the day after one of these men-hunts, no longer recognized the provinces he had visited a few months before. All the other travelers--Grant, Speke, Burton, Cameron, and Stanley--do not speak otherwise of this wooded plateau of Central Africa, the principal theater of the wars between the chiefs.

In the region of the great lakes, over all that vast country which feeds the market of Zanzibar, in Bornou and Fezzan, farther south, on the banks of the Nyassa and the Zambesi, farther west, in the districts of the upper Zaire, which the daring Stanley has just crossed, is seen the same spectacle--ruins, massacres, depopulation. Then will slavery in Africa only end with the disappearance of the black race; and will it be with this race as it is with the Australian race, or the race in New Holland?

But the market of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies will close some day. That outlet will be wanting. Civilized nations can no longer tolerate the slave trade!

Yes, without doubt; and this year even, 1878, ought to see the enfranchisement of all the slaves still possessed by Christian States. However, for long years to come the Mussulman nations will maintain this traffic, which depopulates the African continent. It is for them, in fact, that the most important emigration of the blacks is made, as the number of natives snatched from their provinces and brought to the eastern coast annually exceeds forty thousand. Long before the expedition to Egypt the negroes of the Seunaar were sold by thousands to the negroes of the Darfour, and reciprocally. General Bonaparte was able to buy a pretty large number of these blacks, of whom he made organized soldiers, like the Mamelukes. Since then, during this century, of which four-fifths have now passed away, commerce in slaves has not diminished in Africa. On the contrary.

And, in fact, Islamism is favorable to the slave trade. The black slave must replace the white slave of former times, in Turkish provinces. So contractors of every origin pursue this execrable traffic on a large scale. They thus carry a supplement of population to those races, which are dying out and will disappear some day, because they do not regenerate themselves by labor. These slaves, as in the time of Bonaparte, often become soldiers. With certain nations of the upper Niger, they compose the half of the armies of the African chiefs. Under these circumstances, their fate is not sensibly inferior to that of free men. Besides, when the slave is not a soldier, he is money which has circulation; even in Egypt and at Bornou, officers and functionaries are paid in that money. William Lejean has seen it and has told of it.

Such is, then, the actual state of the trade.

Must it be added that a number of agents of the great European powers are not ashamed to show a deplorable indulgence for this commerce. Nevertheless, nothing is truer; while the cruisers watch the coasts of the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans, the traffic goes on regularly in the interior, the caravans walk on under the eyes of certain functionaries, and massacres, where ten blacks perish to furnish one slave, take place at stated periods!

So it will now be understood how terrible were those words just pronounced by Dick Sand.

"Africa! Equatorial Africa! Africa of slave-traders and slaves!"

And he was not deceived; it was Africa with all its dangers, for his companions and for himself.

But on what part of the African continent had an inexplicable fatality landed him? Evidently on the western coast, and as an aggravating circumstance, the young novice was forced to think that the "Pilgrim" was thrown on precisely that part of the coast of Angola where the caravans, which clear all that part of Africa, arrive.

In fact it was there. It was that country which Cameron on the south and Stanley on the north were going to cross a few years later, and at the price of what efforts! Of this vast territory, which is composed of three provinces, Benguela, Congo, and Angola, there was but little known then except the coast. It extends from the Nourse, in the south, as far as the Zaire in the north, and the two principal towns form two ports, Benguela and St. Paul' de Loanda, the capital of the colony which set off from the kingdom of Portugal.

In the interior this country was then almost unknown. Few travelers had dared to venture there. A pernicious climate, warm and damp lands, which engender fevers, barbarous natives, some of whom are still cannibals, a permanent state of war between tribes, the slave-traders' suspicion of every stranger who seeks to discover the secrets of their infamous commerce; such are the difficulties to surmount, the dangers to overcome in this province of Angola, one of the most dangerous of

equatorial Africa.

Tuckey, in 1816, had ascended the Congo beyond the Yellala Falls; but over an extent of two hundred miles at the most. This simple halting-place could not give a definite knowledge of the country, and nevertheless, it had caused the death of the greater part of the savants and officers who composed the expedition. Thirty-seven years later, Dr. Livingstone had advanced from the Cape of Good Hope as far as the upper Zambesi. Thence, in the month of November, with a hardihood which has never been surpassed, he traversed Africa from the south to the northwest, cleared the Coango, one of the branches of the Congo, and on the 31st of May, 1854, arrived at St. Paul de Loanda. It was the first view in the unknown of the great Portuguese Colony.

Eighteen years after, two daring discoverers crossed Africa from the east to the west, and arrived, one south, the other north, of Angola, after unheard-of difficulties.

The first, according to the date, was a lieutenant in the English navy, Verney-Howet Cameron. In 1872, there was reason to fear that the expedition of the American, Stanley, was in great danger. It had been sent to the great lake region in search of Livingstone. Lieutenant Cameron offered to go over the same road.

The offer was accepted. Cameron, accompanied by Dr. Dillon, Lieutenant Cecil Murphy and Robert Moffat, a nephew of Livingstone, started from Zanzibar. After having crossed Ougogo, he met Livingstone's faithful

servants carrying their master's body to the eastern coast. He continued his route to the west, with the unconquerable desire to pass from one coast to the other.

He crossed Ounyanyembe, Ougounda, and Kahouele, where he collected the great traveler's papers. Having passed over Tanganyika, and the Bambarre mountains, he reached Loualaba, but could not descend its course. After having visited all the provinces devastated by war and depopulated by the slave trade, Kilemmba, Ouroua, the sources of the Lomane, Oulouda, Lovale, and having crossed the Coanza and the immense forests in which Harris has just entrapped Dick Sand and his companions, the energetic Cameron finally perceived the Atlantic Ocean and arrived at Saint Philip of Benguela. This journey of three years and four months had cost the lives of his two companions, Dr. Dillon and Robert Moffat.

Henry Moreland Stanley, the American, almost immediately succeeded the Englishman, Cameron, on the road of discoveries. We know that this intrepid correspondent of the New York Herald, sent in search of Livingstone, had found him on October 30th, 1871, at Oujiji, on Lake Tanganyika. Having so happily accomplished his object for the sake of humanity, Stanley determined to pursue his journey in the interest of geographical science. His object then was to gain a complete knowledge of Loualaba, of which he had only had a glimpse.

Cameron was then lost in the provinces of Central Africa, when, in November, 1874, Stanley quitted Bagamoga, on the eastern coast.

Twenty-one months after, August 24th, 1876, he abandoned Oujiji, which was decimated by an epidemic of smallpox. In seventy-four days he effected the passage of the lake at N'yangwe, a great slave market, which had been already visited by Livingstone and Cameron. Here he witnessed the most horrible scenes, practised in the Maroungou and Manyouema countries by the officers of the Sultan of Zanzibar.

Stanley then took measures to explore the course of the Loualaba and to descend it as far as its mouth. One hundred and forty bearers, engaged at N'yangwe, and nineteen boats, formed the material and the force of his expedition.

From the very start he had to fight the cannibals of Ougouson. From the start, also, he had to attend to the carrying of boats, so as to pass insuperable cataracts.

Under the equator, at the point where the Loualaba makes a bend to the northeast, fifty-four boats, manned by several hundred natives, attacked Stanley's little fleet, which succeeded in putting them to flight. Then the courageous American, reascending as far as the second degree of northern latitude, ascertained that the Loualaba was the upper Zaire, or Congo, and that by following its course he could descend directly to the sea.

This he did, fighting nearly every day against the tribes that lived near the river. On June 3d, 1877, at the passage of the cataracts of Massassa, he lost one of his companions, Francis Pocock. July 18th he

was drawn with his boat into the falls of M'belo, and only escaped death by a miracle.

Finally, August 6th, Henry Stanley arrived at the village of Ni-Sanda, four days' journey from the coast.

Two days after, at Banza-M'bouko, he found the provisions sent by two merchants from Emboma.

He finally rested at this little coast town, aged, at thirty-five years, by over-fatigue and privations, after an entire passage of the African continent, which had taken two years and nine months of his life.

However, the course of the Loualaba was explored as far as the Atlantic; and if the Nile is the great artery of the North, if the Zambesi is the great artery of the East, we now know that Africa still possesses in the West the third of the largest rivers in the world--a river which, in a course of two thousand, nine hundred miles, under the names of Loualaba, Zaire, and Congo, unites the lake region with the Atlantic Ocean.

However, between these two books of travel--Stanley's and Cameron's--the province of Angola is somewhat better known in this year than in 1873, at that period when the "Pilgrim" was lost on the African coast. It was well known that it was the seat of the western slave-trade, thanks to its important markets of Bihe, Cassange, and

Kazounde.

It was into this country that Dick Sand had been drawn, more than one hundred miles from the coast, with a woman exhausted by fatigue and grief, a dying child, and some companions of African descent, the prey, as everything indicated, to the rapacity of slave merchants.

Yes, it was Africa, and not that America where neither the natives, nor the deer, nor the climate are very formidable. It was not that favorable region, situated between the Cordilleras and the coast, where straggling villages abound, and where missions are hospitably opened to all travelers.

They were far away, those provinces of Peru and Bolivia, where the tempest would have surely carried the "Pilgrim," if a criminal hand had not changed its course, where the shipwrecked ones would have found so many facilities for returning to their country.

It was the terrible Angola, not even that part of the coast inspected by the Portuguese authorities, but the interior of the colony, which is crossed by caravans of slaves under the whip of the driver.

What did Dick Sand know of this country where treason had thrown him? Very little; what the missionaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had said of it; what the Portuguese merchants, who frequented the road from St. Paul de Loanda to the Zaïre, by way of San Salvador, knew of it; what Dr. Livingstone had written about it,

after his journey of 1853, and that would have been sufficient to overwhelm a soul less strong than his.

Truly, the situation was terrible.

CHAPTER II.

HARRIS AND NEGORO.

The day after that on which Dick Sand and his companions had established their last halt in the forest, two men met together about three miles from there, as it had been previously arranged between them.

These two men were Harris and Negoro; and we are going to see now what chance had brought together, on the coast of Angola, the Portuguese come from New Zealand, and the American, whom the business of trader obliged to often traverse this province of Western Africa.

Harris and Negoro were seated at the foot of an enormous banyan, on the steep bank of an impetuous stream, which ran between a double hedge of papyrus.

The conversation commenced, for the Portuguese and the American had just met, and at first they dwelt on the deeds which had been accomplished during these last hours.

"And so, Harris," said Negoro, "you have not been able to draw this little troop of Captain Sand, as they call this novice of fifteen years, any farther into Angola?"

"No, comrade," replied Harris; "and it is even astonishing that I have succeeded in leading him a hundred miles at least from the coast. Several days ago my young friend, Dick Sand, looked at me with an anxious air, his suspicions gradually changed into certainties--and faith--"

"Another hundred miles, Harris, and those people would be still more surely in our hands! However, they must not escape us!"

"Ah! How could they?" replied Harris, shrugging his shoulders. "I repeat it, Negoro, there was only time to part company with them. Ten times have I read in my young friend's eyes that he was tempted to send a ball into my breast, and I have too bad a stomach to digest those prunes which weigh a dozen to the pound."

"Good!" returned Negoro; "I also have an account to settle with this novice."

"And you shall settle it at your ease, with interest, comrade. As to me, during the first three days of the journey I succeeded very well in making him take this province for the Desert of Atacama, which I visited formerly. But the child claimed his caoutchoucs and his humming-birds. The mother demanded her quinquinas. The cousin was crazy to find cocuyos. Faith, I was at the end of my imagination, and after with great difficulty making them swallow ostriches for giraffes--a god-send, indeed, Negoro!--I no longer knew what to invent. Besides, I well saw that my young friend no longer accepted my

explanations. Then we fell on elephants' prints. The hippopotami were added to the party. And you know, Negoro, hippopotami and elephants in America are like honest men in the penitentiaries of Benguela. Finally, to finish me, there was the old black, who must find forks and chains at the foot of a tree. Slaves had freed themselves from them to flee. At the same moment the lion roared, starting the company, and it is not easy to pass off that roaring for the mewing of an inoffensive cat. I then had only time to spring on my horse and make my way here."

"I understand," replied Negoro. "Nevertheless, I would wish to hold them a hundred miles further in the province."'

"One does what he can, comrade," replied Harris. "As to you, who followed our caravan from the coast, you have done well to keep your distance. They felt you were there. There is a certain Dingo that does not seem to love you. What have you done to that animal?"

"Nothing," replied Negoro; "but before long it will receive a ball in the head."

"As you would have received one from Dick Sand, if you had shown ever so little of your person within two hundred feet of his gun. Ah! how well he fires, my young friend; and, between you and me, I am obliged to admit that he is, in his way, a fine boy."

"No matter how fine he is, Harris, he will pay dear for his

insolence," replied Negoro, whose countenance expressed implacable cruelty.

"Good," murmured Harris, "my comrade remains just the same as I have always known him! Voyages have not injured him!"

Then, after a moment's silence: "Ah, there, Negoro," continued he, "when I met you so fortunately there below, at the scene of the shipwreck, at the mouth of the Longa, you only had time to recommend those honest people to me, while begging me to lead them as far as possible across this pretended Bolivia. You have not told me what you have been doing these two years! Two years, comrade, in our chance existence, is a long time. One fine day, after having taken charge of a caravan of slaves on old Alvez's account--whose very humble agents we are--you left Cassange, and have not been heard of since! I have thought that you had some disagreement with the English cruiser, and that you were hung!"

"I came very near it, Harris."

"That will come, Negoro."

"Thank you!"

"What would you have?" replied Harris, with an indifference quite philosophical; "it is one of the chances of the trade! We do not carry on the slave-trade on the coast of Africa without running the risk of

dying elsewhere than in our beds! So, you have been taken?"

"Yes!"

"By the English?"

"No! By the Portuguese."

"Before or after having delivered your cargo?" asked Harris.

"After--," replied Negoro, who had hesitated a little about replying. "These Portuguese now make difficulties. They want no more slavery, though they have used it so long to their profit. I was denounced --watched. They took me--"

"And condemned--"

"Me to finish my days in the penitentiary of St. Paul de Loanda."

"A thousand devils!" exclaimed Harris. "That is an unhealthy place for men accustomed, like us, to live in the open air. As to me, perhaps I should prefer being hung."

"One does not escape from the gallows," replied Negoro; "but from prison--"

"You were able to make your escape?"

"Yes, Harris. Only fifteen days after being put in prison. I was able to hide myself at the bottom of the hold of an English steamer, sailing for Auckland, of New Zealand. A barrel of water and a case of conserves, between which I had intruded, furnished me with food and drink during the whole passage. Oh! I suffered terribly, from not being willing to show myself when we were at sea. But, if I had been imprudent enough to do it, I would have been confined again at the bottom of the hold, and, voluntarily or not, the torture would be the same. Besides, on my arrival at Auckland, they would have returned me again to the English authorities, and finally brought me back to the penitentiary of Loanda, or, perhaps, hung me, as you said. That was why I preferred to travel incognito."

"And without paying your passage!" exclaimed Harris, laughing. "Ah! that is not considerate, comrade, to be fed and carried gratis!"

"Yes," returned Negoro, "but thirty days' passage at the bottom of the hold--"

"At last that was over, Negoro. You set out for New Zealand, in the land of the Maoris. But you have returned. Was the return made under the same circumstances?"

"Not so, Harris. You may well believe that, over there, I had only one idea--to return to Angola and take up my trade of slave-trader again."

"Yes," replied Harris, "one loves his trade--from habit."

"For eighteen months--"

Having pronounced those last words, Negoro stopped suddenly. He seized his companion's arm, and listened.

"Harris," said he, lowering his voice, "was there not a trembling in that papyrus bush?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Harris, seizing his gun, always ready to fire.

Negoro and he stood up, looked around them, and listened with the greatest attention.

"There is nothing there," said Harris. "It is this brook, swelled by the storm, which runs more noisily. For two years, comrade, you have been unaccustomed to the noises of the forest, but you will get used to them again. Continue, then, the narration of your adventures. When I understand the past, we shall talk of the future."

Negoro and Harris sat down again at the foot of the banyan. The Portuguese continued, in these terms:

"For eighteen months I vegetated in Auckland. When the steamer arrived there I was able to leave it without being seen; but not a piastre, not a dollar in my pocket! In order to live I had to follow all

trades--"

"Even the trade of an honest man, Negoro?"

"As you say, Harris."

"Poor boy!"

"Now, I was always waiting for an opportunity, which was long coming, when the 'Pilgrim,' a whaler, arrived at the port of Auckland."

"That vessel which went ashore on the coast of Angola?"

"Even the same, Harris, and on which Mrs. Weldon, her child, and her cousin were going to take passage. Now, as an old sailor, having even been second on board a slave ship, I was not out of my element in taking service on a ship. I then presented myself to the 'Pilgrim's' captain, but the crew was made up. Very fortunately for me, the schooner's cook had deserted. Now, he is no sailor who does not know how to cook. I offered myself as head cook. For want of a better, I was accepted. A few days after, the 'Pilgrim' had lost sight of the land of New Zealand."

"But," asked Harris, "according to what my young friend has told me, the 'Pilgrim' did not set sail at all for the coast of Africa. How then has she arrived here?"

"Dick Sand ought not to be able to understand it yet, and perhaps he will never understand it," replied Negoro; "but I am going to explain to you what has passed, Harris, and you will be able to tell it again to your young friend, if it pleases you to do so."

"How, then?" replied Harris. "Speak, comrade, speak!"

"The 'Pilgrim,'" continued Negoro, "as on the way to Valparaiso. When I went on board, I only intended to go to Chili. It was always a good half of the way between New Zealand and Angola, and I was drawing nearer Africa's coast by several thousand miles. But it so happened that only three weeks after leaving Auckland, Captain Hull, who commanded the 'Pilgrim,' disappeared with all his crew, while chasing a whale. On that day, then, only two sailors remained on board--the novice and the cook, Negoro."

"And you took command of the ship?" asked Harris.

"I had that idea at first, but I saw that they distrusted me. There were live strong blacks on board, free men. I would not have been the master, and, on reflection, I remained what I was at the departure--the 'Pilgrim's' cook."

"Then it was chance that led this ship to the coast of Africa?"

"No, Harris," replied Negoro; "there has been no chance in all this adventure except meeting you, in one of your journeys, just on that

part of the coast where the 'Pilgrim' was wrecked. But as to coming in sight of Angola, it was by my will, my secret will, that that was done. Your young friend, still much of a novice in navigation, could only tell his position by means of the log and the compass. Well, one day, the log went to the bottom. One night the compass was made false, and the 'Pilgrim,' driven by a violent tempest, took the wrong route. The length of the voyage, inexplicable to Dick Sand, would be the same to the most experienced seaman. Without the novice knowing or even suspecting it, Cape Horn was doubled, but I, Harris, I recognized it in the midst of the fogs. Then, thanks to me, the needle in the compass took its true direction again, and the ship, blown to the northeast by that frightful hurricane, has just been cast on the coast of Africa, just on this land of Angola which I wished to reach."

"And even at that moment, Negoro," replied Harris, "chance had led me there to receive you, and guide those honest people to the interior. They believed themselves--they could only believe themselves in America. It was easy for me to make them take this province for lower Bolivia, to which it has really some resemblance."

"Yes, they believed it, as your young friend believed they had made the Isle of Paques, when they passed in sight of Tristan d'Acunha."

"Anybody would be deceived by it, Negoro."

"I know it, Harris, and I even counted on profiting by that error. Finally, behold Mrs. Weldon and her companions one hundred miles in

the interior of this Africa, where I wanted to bring them!"

"But," replied Harris, "they know now where they are."

"Ah! what matter at present!" cried Negoro.

"And what will you do with them?" asked Harris.

"What will I do with them?" replied Negoro. "Before telling you, Harris, give me news of our master, the slave-trader, Alvez, whom I have not seen for two years."

"Oh, the old rascal is remarkably well," replied Harris, "and he will be enchanted to see you again."

"Is he at the Bihe market?" asked Negoro.

"No, comrade, he has been at his establishment at Kazounde for a year."

"And business is lively?"

"Yes, a thousand devils!" exclaimed Harris, "although the slave trade becomes more and more difficult, at least on this coast. The Portuguese authorities on one side, and the English cruisers on the other, limit exportations. There are few places, except in the

environs of Mossamedes, to the south of Angola, that the shipping of blacks can now be made with any chance of success. So, at this time, the pens are filled with slaves, waiting for the ships which ought to carry them to Spanish colonies. As to passing them by Benguela, or St. Paul de Loanda, that is not possible. The governors no longer understand reason, no more do the chiefs (title given to the Portuguese governors of secondary establishments). We must, then, return to the factories of the interior. This is what old Alvez intends to do. He will go from the Nyangwe and Tanganyika side to change his stuffs for ivory and slaves. Business is always profitable with upper Egypt and the Mozambique coast, which furnishes all Madagascar. But I fear the time will come when the trade can be no longer carried on. The English are making great progress in the interior of Africa. The missionaries advance and work against us. That Livingstone, curse him, after exploring the lake region, is going, they say, to travel toward Angola. Then they speak of a Lieutenant Cameron, who proposes to cross the continent from east to west. They also fear that the American, Stanley, wishes to do as much. All these visits will end by damaging our operations, Negoro, and if we care for our own interests, not one of those visitors will return to relate in Europe what he has had the indiscretion to come to see in Africa."

Would not one say, to hear them, the rascals, that they were speaking like honest merchants whose affairs were momentarily cramped by a commercial crisis? Who would believe that, instead of sacks of coffee or casks of sugar, they were talking of human beings to export like merchandise? These traders have no other idea of right or wrong. The

moral sense is entirely lacking in them, and if they had any, how quickly they would lose it among the frightful atrocities of the African slave trade.

But where Harris was right, was when he said that civilization was gradually penetrating those savage countries in the wake of those hardy travelers, whose names are indissoluble linked to the discoveries of Equatorial Africa. At the head, David Livingstone, after him, Grant, Speke, Burton, Cameron, Stanley, those heroes will leave imperishable names as benefactors of humanity.

When their conversation reached that point, Harris knew what the last two years of Negoro's life had been. The trader Alvez's old agent, the escaped prisoner from the Loanda penitentiary, reappeared the same as Harris had always known him, that is, ready to do anything. But what plan Negoro intended to take in regard to the shipwrecked from the "Pilgrim," Harris did not yet know. He asked his accomplice about it.

"And now," said he, "what are you going to do with those people?"

"I shall make two parties of them," replied Negoro, like a man whose plan had been long formed, "those whom I shall sell as slaves, and those whom----"

The Portuguese did not finish, but his ferocious physiognomy spoke plainly enough.

"Which will you sell?" asked Harris.

"Those blacks who accompany Mrs. Weldon," replied Negoro. "Old Tom is not perhaps of much value, but the others are four strong fellows, who will bring a high price in the Kazounde market."

"I well believe it, Negoro," replied Harris. "Four negroes, well made, accustomed to work, have very little resemblance to those brutes which come to us from the interior. Certainly, you will sell them at a high price. Slaves, born in America, and exported to the markets of Angola; that is rare merchandise! But," added the American, "you have not told me if there was any money on board the 'Pilgrim.'"

"Oh! a few hundred dollars only, which I have succeeded in saving. Fortunately, I count on certain returns."

"Which, then, comrade?" asked Harris, with curiosity.

"Nothing!" replied Negoro, who appeared to regret having spoken more than he intended.

"It now remains to take possession of all that high-priced merchandise," said Harris.

"Is it, then, so difficult?" asked Negoro.

"No, comrade. Ten miles from here, on the Coanza, a caravan of slaves

is encamped, conducted by the Arab, Ibn Hamis. He only awaits my return to take the road for Kazounde. There are more native soldiers there than are needed to capture Dick Sand and his companions. It will be sufficient for my young friend to conceive the idea of going to the Coanza."

"But will he get that idea?" asked Negoro.

"Surely," replied Harris, "because he is intelligent, and cannot suspect the danger that awaits him. Dick Sand would not think of returning to the coast by the way we have followed together. He would be lost among these immense forests. He will seek, then, I am sure, to reach one of the rivers that flow toward the coast, so as to descend it on a raft. He has no other plan to take, and I know he will take it."

"Yes, perhaps so," replied Negoro, who was reflecting.

"It is not 'perhaps so,' it is 'assuredly so,' that must be said," continued Harris. "Do you see, Negoro? It is as if I had appointed a rendezvous with my young friend on the banks of the Coanza."

"Well, then," replied Negoro, "let us go. I know Dick Sand. He will not delay an hour, and we must get before him."

"Let us start, comrade."

Harris and Negoro both stood up, when the noise that had before attracted the Portuguese's attention was renewed. It was a trembling of the stems between the high papyrus.

Negoro stopped, and seized Harris's hand.

Suddenly a low barking was heard. A dog appeared at the foot of the bank, with its mouth open, ready to spring.

"Dingo!" cried Harris.

"Ah! this time it shall not escape me!" replied Negoro.

Dingo was going to jump upon him, when Negoro, seizing Harris's gun, quickly put it to his shoulder and fired.

A long howl of pain replied to the detonation, and Dingo disappeared between the double row of bushes that bordered the brook.

Negoro descended at once to the bottom of the bank.

Drops of blood stained some of the papyrus stems, and a long red track was left on the pebbles of the brook.

"At last that cursed animal is paid off!" exclaimed Negoro.

Harris had been present at this whole scene without saying a word.

"Ah now, Negoro," said he, "that dog had a particular grudge against you."

"It seemed so, Harris, but it will have a grudge against me no longer!"

"And why did it detest you so much, comrade?"

"Oh! an old affair to settle between it and me."

"An old affair?" replied Harris.

Negoro said no more about it, and Harris concluded that the Portuguese had been silent on some past adventure, but he did not insist on knowing it.

A few moments later, both, descending the course of the brook, went toward the Coanza, across the forest.

* * * * *

CHAPTER III.

ON THE MARCH.

Africa! That name so terrible under the present circumstances, that name which he must now substitute for that of America, was not for an instant out of Dick Sand's thoughts. When the young novice traced back the last weeks, it was to ask himself how the "Pilgrim" had ended by reaching this dangerous shore, how it had doubled Cape Horn, and passed from one ocean to the other! He could now explain to himself why, in spite of the rapid motion of his vessel, land was so long coming in sight, because the length of the distance which he should have made to reach the American coast had been doubled without his knowledge.

"Africa! Africa!" Dick Sand repeated.

Then, suddenly, while he called up with tenacious mind all the incidents of this inexplicable voyage, he felt that his compass must have been injured. He remembered, too, that the first compass had been broken, and that the log-line had snapped--a fact which had made it impossible for him to establish the speed of the "Pilgrim."

"Yes," thought he, "there remained but one compass on board, one only, the indications of which I could not control! And one night I was awakened by a cry from old Tom. Negoro was there, aft. He had just

fallen on the binnacle. May he not have put it out of order?"

Dick Sand was growing enlightened. He had his finger on the truth. He now understood all that was ambiguous in Negoro's conduct. He saw his hand in this chain of incidents which had led to the loss of the "Pilgrim," and had so fearfully endangered those on board of her.

But what, then, was this miserable man? Had he been a sailor and known so well how to hide the fact? Was he capable of contriving this odious plot which had thrown the ship on the coast of Africa?

At any rate, if obscure points still existed in the past, the present could offer no more of them. The young novice knew only too well that he was in Africa, and very probably in the fatal province of Angola, more than a hundred miles from the coast. He also knew that Harris's treason could no longer be doubted. From this fact, the most simple logic led him to conclude that the American and the Portuguese had long known each other, that a fatal chance had united them on this coast, and that a plan had been concerted between them, the result of which would be dreadful for the survivors of the "Pilgrim."

And now, why these odious actions? That Negoro wished, at all hazards, to seize Tom and his companions, and sell them for slaves in this slave-trading country, might be admitted. That the Portuguese, moved by a sentiment of hatred, would seek to be revenged on him, Dick Sand, who had treated him as he deserved, might also be conceived. But Mrs. Weldon, this mother, and this young child--what would the wretch

do with them? If Dick Sand could have overheard a little of the conversation between Harris and Negoro, he would have known what to expect, and what dangers menaced Mrs. Weldon, the blacks, and himself.

The situation was frightful, but the young novice did not yield under it. Captain on board, he remained captain on land. He must save Mrs. Weldon, little Jack, all those whose fate Heaven had placed in his hands. His task was only commencing. He would accomplish it to the end.

After two or three hours, during which the present and the future were summed up in his mind, with their good and their evil chances--the last, alas! the most numerous--Dick Sand rose, firm and resolved.

The first glimmer of light then touched the summits of the forest. With the exception of the novice and Tom, all slept. Dick Sand approached the old black.

"Tom," he said to him, in a low tone, "you have recognized the roaring of the lion, you have remembered the instruments of the slave-traders. You know that we are in Africa!"

"Yes, Mr. Dick, I know it."

"Well, Tom, not a word of all that, neither to Mrs. Weldon nor to your companions. We must be the only ones to know, the only ones to have any fears."

"Alone--in fact. It is necessary," replied Tom.

"Tom," continued the novice, "we have to watch more carefully than ever. We are in an enemy's country--and what enemies! what a country! To keep our companions on their guard, it will be enough to tell them that we have been betrayed by Harris. They will think that we fear an attack from wandering Indians, and that will suffice."

"You can count absolutely on their courage and devotion, Mr. Dick."

"I know it, as I count on your good sense and your experience. You will come to my help, old Tom?"

"Always, and everywhere, Mr. Dick."

Dick Sand's plan was accepted and approved by the old black. If Harris were detected in open treason before the hour for action, at least the young novice and his companions were not in fear of any immediate danger. In fact, it was the discovery of the irons abandoned by some slaves, and the roaring of the lion, that had caused the American's sudden disappearance.

He knew that he was discovered, and he had fled probably before the little party which he guided had reached the place where an attack had been arranged. As for Negoro, whose presence Dingo had certainly recognized during these last days of the march, he must have rejoined

Harris, so as to consult with him. At any rate, several hours would pass before Dick Sand and his friends would be assailed, and it was necessary to profit by them.

The only plan was to regain the coast as quickly as possible. This coast, as the young novice had every reason to believe, was that of Angola. After having reached it, Dick Sand would try to gain, either to the north or to the south, the Portuguese settlements, where his companions could await in safety some opportunity to return to their country.

But, to effect this return to the coast, should they take the road already passed over? Dick Sand did not think so, and in that he was going to agree with Harris, who had clearly foreseen that circumstances would oblige the young novice to shorten the road.

In fact, it would have been difficult, not to say imprudent, to recommence this difficult journey through the forest, which, besides, could only tend to bring them out at the place they had started from. This would also allow Negoro's accomplices to follow an assured track. The only thing they could do was to cross a river, without leaving any traces, and, later on, to descend its course. At the same time, there was less to fear from an attack by animals, which by a happy chance had so far kept at a good distance. Even the animosity of the natives, under these circumstances, seemed less important. Once embarked on a solid raft, Dick Sand and his companions, being well armed, would be in the best condition to defend themselves. The whole thing was to

find the river.

It must be added that, given the actual state of Mrs. Weldon and her little Jack, this mode of traveling would be the most suitable. Arms would not fail to carry the sick child. Lacking Harris's horse, they could even make a litter of branches, on which Mrs. Weldon could be borne. But this would require two men out of five, and Dick Sand wished, with good reason, that all his companions might be free in their movements in case of a sudden attack.

And then, in descending the current of a river, the young novice would find himself in his element!

The question now was, whether a navigable stream of water existed in the neighborhood. Dick Sand thought it probable, and for this reason: The river which emptied into the Atlantic at the place where the "Pilgrim" had stranded could not ascend much to the north, nor much to the east, of the province, because a chain of mountains quite close to them--those which they had mistaken for the Cordilleras--shut in the horizon on these two sides. Then, either the river descended from these heights, or it made a bend toward the south, and, in these two cases, Dick Sand could not take long to find the course. Perhaps, even before reaching the river--for it had a right to this qualification, being a direct tributary of the ocean--one of its affluents would be met with which would suffice for the transport of the little party.

At any rate, a stream of some sort could not be far away.

In fact, during the last miles of the journey the nature of the earth had been modified. The declivities diminished and became damp. Here and there ran narrow streams, which indicated that the sub-soil enclosed everywhere a watery network. During the last day's march the caravan had kept along one of these rivulets, whose waters, reddened with oxyde of iron, eat away its steep, worn banks. To find it again could not take long, or be very difficult. Evidently they could not descend its impetuous course, but it would be easy to follow it to its junction with a more considerable, possibly a navigable, affluent.

Such was the very simple plan which Dick Sand determined upon, after having conferred with old Tom.

Day came, all their companions gradually awoke. Mrs. Weldon placed little Jack in Nan's arms. The child was drowsy and faded-looking during the intermittent periods, and was sad to see.

Mrs. Weldon approached Dick Sand. "Dick," she asked, after a steady glance, "where is Harris? I do not perceive him."

The young novice thought that, while letting his companions believe that they were treading on the soil of Bolivia, it would not do to hide from them the American's treason. So he said, without hesitation: "Harris is no longer here."

"Has he, then, gone ahead?" asked Mrs. Weldon. "He has fled, Mrs.

Weldon," replied Dick Sand. "This Harris is a traitor, and it is according to Negoro's plan that he led us this far." "For what motive?" quickly asked Mrs. Weldon. "I do not know," replied Dick Sand; "but what I do know is, that we must return, without delay, to the coast."

"That man--a traitor!" repeated Mrs. Weldon. "I had a presentiment of it! And you think, Dick, that he is in league with Negoro?"

"That may be, Mrs. Weldon. The wretch is on our track. Chance has brought these two scoundrels together, and--"

"And I hope that they will not be separated when I find them again!" said Hercules. "I will break the head of one against the other's head!" added the giant, holding out his formidable fists.

"But my child!" cried Mrs. Weldon. "The care that I hoped to find for him at the farm of San Felice--"

"Jack will get well," said old Tom, "when he approaches the more healthy part of the coast."

"Dick," remarked Mrs. Weldon, "you are sure that this Harris has betrayed us?"

"Yes, Mrs. Weldon," replied the young novice, who would have liked to avoid any explanation on this subject.

He also hastened to add, while looking at the old black:

"This very night Tom and I discovered his treason, and if he had not jumped on his horse and fled, I would have killed him."

"So this farm--"

"There is neither farm, nor village, nor settlement in the neighborhood," replied Dick Sand. "Mrs. Weldon, I repeat to you, we must return to the coast."

"By the same road, Dick?"

"No, Mrs. Weldon, but by descending a river which will take us to the sea without fatigue and without danger. A few more miles on foot, and I do not doubt--"

"Oh, I am strong, Dick!" replied Mrs. Weldon, who struggled against her own weakness. "I will walk! I will carry my child!"

"We are here, Mrs. Weldon," said Bat, "and we will carry you!"

"Yes. yes," added Austin. "Two branches of a tree, foliage laid across."

"Thanks, my friends," replied Mrs. Weldon; "but I want to march. I

will march. Forward!"

"Forward!" exclaimed the young novice.

"Give me Jack," said Hercules, who took the child from Nan's arms. "When I am not carrying something, I am tired."

The brave negro gently took in his strong arms the little sleeping boy, who did not even wake.

Their arms were carefully examined. What remained of the provisions was placed in one package, so as to be carried by one man. Austin threw it on his back, and his companions thus became free in their movements.

Cousin Benedict, whose long limbs were like steel and defied all fatigue, was ready to set out. Had he remarked Harris's disappearance? It would be imprudent to affirm it. Little disturbed him. Besides, he was under the effects of one of the most terrible catastrophes that could befall him.

In fact, a grave complication, Cousin Benedict had lost his magnifying-glass and his spectacles. Very happily, also, but without his suspecting it, Bat had found the two precious articles in the tall grass where they had slept, but, by Dick Sand's advice, he kept them safely. By this means they would be sure that the big child would keep quiet during the march, because he could see no farther, as they say,

than the end of his nose.

Thus, placed between Acteon and Austin, with the formal injunction not to leave them, the woful Benedict uttered no complaint, but followed in his place, like a blind man led by a string.

The little party had not gone fifty steps when old Tom suddenly stopped it with one word.

"Dingo?" said he.

"In fact, Dingo is not here!" replied Hercules.

The black called the dog several times with his powerful voice.

No barking replied to him.

Dick Sand remained silent. The absence of the dog, was to be regretted, for he had preserved the little party from all surprise.

"Could Dingo have followed Harris?" asked Tom.

"Harris? No," replied Dick Sand; "but he may have put himself on Negoro's scent. He felt him in our steps."

"This cook of misfortune would quickly end him with a ball!" cried Hercules.

"Provided Dingo did not first strangle him," replied Bat.

"Perhaps so," replied the young novice. "But we cannot wait for Dingo's return. Besides, if he is living, the intelligent animal will know how to find us. Forward!"

The weather was very warm. Since daybreak large clouds obscured the horizon. Already a storm was threatened in the air. Probably the day would not end without some thunder-claps. Happily the forest, more or less dense, retained a little freshness of the surface of the soil. Here and there great forest trees inclosed prairies covered with a tall, thick grass. In certain spots enormous trunks, already petrified, lay on the ground, indicating the presence of coal mines, which are frequently met with on the African continent. Then, in the clearings, where the green carpet was mingled with some sprigs of roses, the flowers were various in color, yellow and blue ginger plants, pale lobelias, red orchids, incessantly visited by the insects which fertilized them.

The trees no longer formed impenetrable masses, but their nature was more varied. There were a kind of palm-tree, which gives an oil found only in Africa; cotton-trees forming thickets from eight to ten feet high, whose wood-stalks produce a cotton with long hairs, almost analogous to that of Fernambouc. From the copals there oozes, by the holes which certain insects make, an odorous gum, which runs along the ground and collects for the wants of the natives. Here spread the

lemon-trees, the grenadiers of a savage condition of a country, and twenty other odorous plants, which prove the prodigious fertility of this plateau of Central Africa. In several places, also, the perfume was agreeably mingled with the tine odor of vanilla, although they could not discover what tree exhaled it.

This whole collection of trees and plants was perfectly green, although it was in the middle of the dry season, and only rare storms could water these luxuriant forests. It was then the time for fevers; but, as Livingstone has observed, they can be cured by leaving the place where they have been contracted. Dick Sand knew this remark of the great traveler, and he hoped that little Jack would not contradict it. He told it to Mrs. Weldon, after having observed that the periodical access had not returned as they feared, and that the child slept quietly in Hercules' arms.

Thus they went forward carefully and rapidly. Sometimes they discovered traces where men or animals had recently passed. The twisted and broken branches of the brushwood and the thickets afforded an opportunity to walk with a more equal step. But the greater part of the time numerous obstacles, which they had to overcome, retarded the little party, to Dick Sand's great disappointment.

There were twisted lianes that might justly be compared with the disordered rigging of a ship, certain vines similar to bent swords, whose blades were ornamented with long thorns, vegetable serpents, fifty or sixty feet long, which had the faculty of turning to prick

the passer-by with their sharp spikes. The blacks, hatchet in hand, cut them down with vigorous blows, but the lianes reappeared constantly, reaching from the earth to the top of the highest trees which they encircled.

The animal kingdom was not less curious than the vegetable kingdom in this part of the province. Birds flew in vast numbers under these powerful branches; but it will be understood that they had no gunshot to fear from the men, who wished to pass as secretly as rapidly. There were Guinea fowls in large flocks, heath-cocks of various kinds, very difficult to approach, and some of those birds which the Americans of the North have, by onomatopoeia, called "whip-poor-wills," three syllables which exactly reproduce their cries. Dick Sand and Tom might truly have believed themselves in some province of the new continent. But, alas! they knew what to expect.

Until then the deer, so dangerous in Africa, had not approached the little troop. They again saw, in this first halt, some giraffes, which Harris had undoubtedly called ostriches. These swift animals passed rapidly, frightened by the apparition of a caravan in these little-frequented forests. In the distance, on the edge of the prairie, there arose at times a thick cloud of dust. It was a herd of buffaloes, which galloped with the noise of wagons heavily laden.

For two miles Dick Sand thus followed the course of the rivulet which must end in a more important river. He was in haste to confide his companions to the rapid current of one of the coast rivers. He felt

sure that the dangers and the fatigue would be much less than on the shore.

Towards noon three miles had been cleared without any bad incident or meeting. There was no trace of either Harris or Negoro. Dingo had not reappeared. It was necessary to halt to take rest and nourishment.

The encampment was established in a bamboo thicket, which completely sheltered the little party.

They talked very little during this repast. Mrs. Weldon had taken her little boy in her arms; she could not take her eyes off of him; she could not eat.

"You must take some nourishment, Mrs. Weldon," Dick Sand repeated several times. "What will become of you if your strength gives out? Eat, eat! We will soon start again, and a good current will carry us without fatigue to the coast."

Mrs. Weldon looked in Dick Sand's face while he thus talked. The young novice's burning eyes spoke of the courage by which he felt animated. In seeing him thus, in observing these brave, devoted blacks, wife and mother, she could not yet despair; and, besides, why was she abandoned? Did she not think herself on hospitable ground? Harris's treason could not, in her eyes, have any very serious consequences. Dick Sand read her thought, and he kept his eyes on the ground.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BAD ROADS OF ANGOLA.

At this moment little Jack awoke, and put his arms around his mother's neck. His eyes looked better. The fever had not returned.

"You are better, my darling," said Mrs. Weldon, pressing the sick child to her heart.

"Yes, mama," replied Jack, "but I am a little thirsty."

They could only give the child some fresh water, of which he drank with pleasure.

"And my friend Dick?" he said.

"Here I am, Jack," replied Dick Sand, coming to take the young child's hand.

"And my friend Hercules?"

"Hercules is here, Mr. Jack," replied the giant, bringing nearer his good face.

"And the horse?" demanded little Jack.

"The horse? Gone, Mr. Jack," replied Hercules. "I will carry you. Will you find that I trot too hard?"

"No," replied little Jack; "but then I shall no longer have any bridle to hold."

"Oh! you will put a bit in my mouth, if you wish," said Hercules, opening his large mouth, "and you may pull back so long as that will give you pleasure."

"You know very well that I shall not pull back."

"Good! You would be wrong! I have a hard mouth."

"But Mr. Harris's farm?" the little boy asked again.

"We shall soon arrive there, my Jack," replied Mrs. Weldon. "Yes, soon!"

"Will we set out again?" then said Dick Sand, in order to cut short this conversation.

"Yes, Dick, let us go," replied Mrs. Weldon.

The camp was broken up, and the march continued again in the same order. It was necessary to pass through the underwood, so as not to

leave the course of the rivulet. There had been some paths there, formerly, but those paths were dead, according to the native expression--that is, brambles and brushwood had usurped them. In these painful conditions they might spend three hours in making one mile. The blacks worked without relaxation. Hercules, after putting little Jack back in Nan's arms, took his part of the work; and what a part! He gave stout "heaves," making his ax turn round, and a hole was made before them, as if he had been a devouring fire.

Fortunately, this fatiguing work would not last. This first mile cleared, they saw a large hole, opened through the underwood, which ended obliquely at the rivulet and followed its bank. It was a passage made by elephants, and those animals, doubtless by hundreds, were in the habit of traversing this part of the forest. Great holes, made by the feet of the enormous pachyderms, riddled a soil softened during the rainy season. Its spongy nature also prepared it for those large imprints.

It soon appeared that this passage did not serve for those gigantic animals alone. Human beings had more than once taken this route, but as flocks, brutally led to the slaughter-house, would have followed it. Here and there bones of dead bodies strewed the ground; remains of skeletons, half gnawed by animals, some of which still bore the slave's fetters.

There are, in Central Africa, long roads thus marked out by human débris. Hundreds of miles are traversed by caravans, and how many

unhappy wretches fall by the way, under the agents' whips, killed by fatigue or privations, decimated by sickness! How many more massacred by the traders themselves, when food fails! Yes, when they can no longer feed them, they kill them with the gun, with the sword, with the knife! These massacres are not rare.

So, then, caravans of slaves had followed this road. For a mile Dick Sand and his companions struck against these scattered bones at each step, putting to flight enormous fern-owls. Those owls rose at their approach, with a heavy flight, and turned round in the air.

Mrs. Weldon looked without seeing. Dick Sand trembled lest she should question him, for he hoped to lead her back to the coast without telling her that Harris's treachery had led them astray in an African province. Fortunately, Mrs. Weldon did not explain to herself what she had under her eyes. She had desired to take her child again, and little Jack, asleep, absorbed all her care. Nan walked near her, and neither of them asked the young novice the terrible questions he dreaded.

Old Tom went along with his eyes down. He understood only too well why this opening was strewn with human bones.

His companions looked to the right, to the left, with an air of surprise, as if they were crossing an interminable cemetery, the tombs of which had been overthrown by a cataclysm; but they passed in silence.

Meanwhile, the bed of the rivulet became deeper and wider at the same time. Its current was less impetuous. Dick Sand hoped that it would soon become navigable, or that it would before long reach a more important river, tributary to the Atlantic.

Cost what it might, the young novice was determined to follow this stream of water. Neither did he hesitate to abandon this opening; because, as ending by an oblique line, it led away from the rivulet.

The little party a second time ventured through the dense underwood. They marched, ax in hand, through leaves and bushes inextricably interlaced.

But if this vegetation obstructed the ground, they were no longer in the thick forest that bordered the coast. Trees became rare. Large sheaves of bamboo alone rose above the grass, and so high that even Hercules was not a head over them. The passage of the little party was only revealed by the movement of these stalks.

Toward three o'clock in the afternoon of that day, the nature of the ground totally changed. Here were long plains, which must have been entirely inundated in the rainy season. The earth, now more swampy, was carpeted by thick mosses, beneath charming ferns. Should it be diversified by any steep ascents, they would see brown hematites appear, the last deposits of some rich vein of mineral.

Dick Sand then recalled--and very fortunately--what he had read in "Livingstone's Travels." More than once the daring doctor had nearly rested in these marshes, so treacherous under foot.

"Listen to me, my friends," said he, going ahead. "Try the ground before stepping on it."

"In fact," replied Tom, "they say that these grounds have been softened by the rain; but, however, it has not rained during these last days."

"No," replied Bat; "but the storm is not far off."

"The greater reason," replied Dick Sand, "why we should hurry and get clear of this swamp before it commences. Hercules, take little Jack in your arms. Bat, Austin, keep near Mrs. Weldon, so as to be able to help her if necessary. You, Mr. Benedict--Why, what are you doing, Mr. Benedict?"

"I am falling!" innocently replied Cousin Benedict, who had just disappeared as if a trap had been suddenly opened beneath his feet.

In fact, the poor man had ventured on a sort of quagmire, and had disappeared half-way in the sticky mud. They stretched out their hands, and he rose, covered with slime, but quite satisfied at not having injured his precious entomologist's box. Acteon went beside him, and made it his duty to preserve the unlucky, near-sighted man

from any new disasters.

Besides, Cousin Benedict had made rather a bad choice of the quagmire for his plunge. When they drew him out of the sticky earth a large quantity of bubbles rose to the surface, and, in bursting, they emitted some gases of a suffocating odor. Livingstone, who had been sunk up to his chest in this slime, compared these grounds to a collection of enormous sponges, made of black, porous earth, from which numerous streams of water spouted when they were stepped upon. These places were always very dangerous.

For the space of half a mile Dick Sand and his companions must march over this spongy soil. It even became so bad that Mrs. Weldon was obliged to stop, for she sank deep in the mire. Hercules, Bat, and Austin, wishing to spare her the unpleasantness more than the fatigue of a passage across this marshy plain, made a litter of bamboos, on which she consented to sit. Her little Jack was placed in her arms, and they endeavored to cross that pestilential marsh in the quickest manner.

The difficulties were great. Acteon held Cousin Benedict firmly. Tom aided Nan, who, without him, would have disappeared several times in some crevice. The three other blacks carried the litter. At the head, Dick Sand sounded the earth. The choice of the place to step on was not made without trouble. They marched from preference on the edges, which were covered by a thick and tough grass. Often the support failed, and they sank to the knees in the slime.

At last, about five o'clock in the evening, the marsh being cleared, the soil regained sufficient firmness, thanks to its clayey nature; but they felt it damp underneath. Very evidently these lands lay below the neighboring rivers, and the water ran through their pores.

At that time the heat had become overwhelming. It would even have been unbearable, if thick storm clouds had not interposed between the burning rays and the ground. Distant lightnings began to rend the sky and low rollings of thunder grumbled in the depths of the heavens. A formidable storm was going to burst forth.

Now, these cataclysms are terrible in Africa: rain in torrents, squalls of wind which the strongest trees cannot resist, clap after clap of thunder, such is the contest of the elements in that latitude.

Dick Sand knew it well, and he became very uneasy. They could not pass the night without shelter. The plain was likely to be inundated, and it did not present a single elevation on which it was possible to seek refuge.

But refuge, where would they seek it in this low desert, without a tree, without a bush? The bowels of the earth even would not give it. Two feet below the surface they would find water.

However, toward the north a series of low hills seemed to limit the marshy plain. It was as the border of this depression of land. A few

trees were profiled there on a more distant, clearer belt, left by the clouds on the line of the horizon.

There, if shelter were still lacking, the little band would at least no longer risk being caught in a possible inundation. There perhaps was salvation for all.

"Forward, my friends, forward!" repeated Dick Sand. "Three miles more and we shall be safer than in these bottom-lands."

"Hurry! hurry!" cried Hercules.

The brave black would have wished to take that whole world in big arms and carry it alone.

Those words inspired those courageous men, and in spite of the fatigue of a day's march, they advanced more quickly than they had done at the commencement from the halting-place.

When the storm burst forth the end to be attained was still more than two miles off. Now--a fact which was the more to be feared--the rain did not accompany the first lightnings exchanged between the ground and the electrical clouds. Darkness then became almost complete, though the sun had not disappeared below the horizon. But the dome of vapors gradually lowered, as if it threatened to fall in--a falling in which must result in a torrent of rain. Lightnings, red or blue, split it in a thousand places, and enveloped the plain in an inextricable

network of fire.

Twenty times Dick and his companions ran the risk of being struck by lightning. On this plateau, deprived of trees, they formed the only projecting points which could attract the electrical discharges. Jack, awakened by the noise of the thunder, hid himself in Hercules' arms. He was very much afraid, poor little boy, but he did not wish to let his mother see it, for fear of afflicting her more. Hercules, while taking great steps, consoled him as well as he could.

"Do not be afraid, little Jack," he repeated. "If the thunder comes near us, I will break it in two with a single hand. I am stronger than it!"

And, truly, the giant's strength reassured Jack a little.

Meanwhile the rain must soon fall, and then it would in torrents, poured out by those clouds in condensing. What would become of Mrs. Weldon and her companions, if they did not find a shelter?

Dick Sand stopped a moment near old Tom.

"What must be done?" said he.

"Continue our march, Mr. Dick," replied Tom. "We cannot remain on this plain, that the rain is going to transform into a marsh!"

"No, Tom, no! But a shelter! Where? What? If it were only a hut--"

Dick Sand had suddenly broken off his sentence. A more vivid flash of lightning had just illuminated the whole plain.

"What have I seen there, a quarter of a mile off?" exclaimed Dick Sand.

"Yes, I also, I have seen--" replied old Tom, shaking his head.

"A camp, is it not?"

"Yes, Mr. Dick, it must be a camp, but a camp of natives!"

A new flash enabled them to observe this camp more closely. It occupied a part of the immense plain.

There, in fact, rose a hundred conical tents, symmetrically arranged, and measuring from twelve to fifteen feet in height. Not a soldier showed himself, however. Were they then shut up under their tents, so as to let the storm pass, or was the camp abandoned?

In the first case, whatever Heaven should threaten, Dick Sand must flee in the quickest manner. In the second, there was, perhaps, the shelter he asked.

"I shall find out," he said to himself; then, addressing old Tom:

"Stay here. Let no one follow me. I shall go to reconnoiter that camp."

"Let one of us accompany you, Mr. Dick."

"No, Tom, I shall go alone. I can approach without being seen. Stay here."

The little troop, that followed Tom and Dick Sand, halted. The young novice left at once and disappeared in the darkness, which was profound when the lightning did not tear the sky.

Some large drops of rain already began to fall.

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs. Weldon, approaching the old black.

"We have perceived a camp, Mrs. Weldon," replied Tom; "a camp--or, perhaps, a village, and our captain wished to reconnoiter it before leading us to it."

Mrs. Weldon was satisfied with this reply. Three minutes after, Dick Sand was returning.

"Come! come!" he cried, in a voice which expressed his entire satisfaction.

"The camp is abandoned?" asked Tom.

"It is not a camp," replied the young novice; "it is not a village. They are ant-hills!"

"Ant-hills!" exclaimed Cousin Benedict, whom that word aroused.

"Yes, Mr. Benedict, but ant-hills twelve feet high, at least, and in which we shall endeavor to hide ourselves."

"But then," replied Cousin Benedict, "those would be ant-hills of the warlike termite or of the devouring termite. Only those ingenious insects raise such monuments, which the greatest architects would not disown."

"Whether they be termites or not, Mr. Benedict," replied Dick Sand, "we must dislodge them and take their place."

"They will devour us. They will be defending their rights."

"Forward! Forward!"

"But, wait now!" said Cousin Benedict again. "I thought those ant-hills only existed in Africa."

"Forward!" exclaimed Dick Sand, for the last time, with a sort of violence. He was so much afraid that Mrs. Weldon might hear the last word pronounced by the entomologist.

They followed Dick Sand with all haste. A furious wind had sprung up. Large drops crackled on the ground. In a few moments the squalls of wind would become unbearable. Soon one of those cones which stood on the plain was reached. No matter how threatening the termites might be, the human beings must not hesitate. If they could not drive the insects away, they must share their abode.

At the bottom of this cone, made with a kind of reddish clay, there was a very narrow hole. Hercules enlarged it with his cutlass in a few moments, so as to give a passage even to a man like himself.

To Cousin Benedict's extreme surprise, not one of the thousands of termites that ought to occupy the ant-hill showed itself. Was, then, the cone abandoned?

The hole enlarged, Dick and his companions glided into it. Hercules disappeared the last, just as the rain fell with such rage that it seemed to extinguish the lightnings.

But those wind squalls were no longer to be feared. A happy chance had furnished this little troop with a solid shelter, better than a tent, better than a native's hut.

It was one of those termite cones that, according to Lieutenant Cameron's comparison, are more astonishing than the pyramids of Egypt, raised by the hands of men, because they have been built by such small

insects.

"It is," said he, "as if a nation had built Mount Everest, the highest mountain of the Himalaya chain."

CHAPTER V.

ANTS AND THEIR DWELLING.

At this moment the storm burst with a violence unknown in temperate latitudes.

It was providential that Dick Sand and his companions had found this refuge!

In fact, the rain did not fall in distinct drops, but in streams of various thickness. Sometimes it was a compact mass forming a sheet of water, like a cataract, a Niagara. Imagine an aerial basin, containing a whole sea, being upset. Under such showers the ground was hollowed out, the plains were changed to lakes, the streams to torrents, the rivers, overflowing, inundated vast territories. In temperate zones the violence of the storms decreases according to their duration; but in Africa, however heavy they are, they continue for several entire days. How can so much electricity be collected in the clouds? How can such quantities of vapor be accumulated? It is very difficult to comprehend this. However, such are the facts, and one might suppose himself transported to the extraordinary epochs of the diluvian period.

Fortunately, the ant-cone, with its thick walls, was perfectly impervious. A beaver's hut, of well-beaten earth, could not have been

more water-tight. A torrent could have passed over it without a single drop of water filtering through its pores.

As soon as Dick Sand and his companions had taken possession of the cone they occupied themselves in examining its interior arrangement. The lantern was lighted, and the ant-hill was sufficiently illuminated. This cone, which measured twelve feet in height inside, was eleven feet wide, except in its upper part, which rounded in the form of a sugar loaf. Everywhere the walls were about one foot in thickness, and there was a distance between the stories of cells which adorned them.

We may be astonished at the construction of such monuments, due to these industrious swarms of insects, but it is true that they are frequently found in the interior of Africa. Smeathman, a Dutch traveler of the last century, with four of his companions, occupied the top of one of these cones. In the Lounde, Livingstone observed several of these ant-hills, built of reddish clay, and attaining a height of fifteen and twenty feet. Lieutenant Cameron has many a time mistaken for a camp these collections of cones which dotted the plain in N'yangwe. He has even stopped at the foot of great edifices, not more than twenty feet high, but composed of forty or fifty enormous rounded cones, flanked with bell-towers like the dome of a cathedral, such as Southern Africa possesses.

To what species of ant was due, then, the prodigious style of architecture of these cones?

"To the warlike termite," Cousin Benedict had replied, without hesitating, as soon as he had recognized the nature of the materials employed in their construction.

And, in fact, the walls, as has been said, were made of reddish clay. Had they been formed of a gray or black alluvian earth, they must have been attributed to the "termes mordax" or the "termes atrox." As we see, these insects have not very cheering names--a fact which cannot but please a strong entomologist, such as Cousin Benedict.

The central part of the cone, in which the little troop had first found shelter, and which formed the empty interior, would not have contained them; but large cavities, in close contact, made a number of divisions, in which a person of medium height could find refuge. Imagine a succession of open drawers, and at the bottom of those drawers millions of cells which the termites had occupied, and the interior disposition of the ant-hill is easily understood. To sum up, these drawers are in tiers, like the berths in a ship's cabin. In the upper ones Mrs. Weldon, little Jack, Nan, and Cousin Benedict took refuge. In the lower row Austin, Bat, and Acteon hid themselves. As for Dick Sand, Tom, and Hercules, they remained in the lower part of the cone.

"My friends," then said the young novice to the two blacks, "the ground is becoming damp. We must fill it up by crumbling the red clay from the base; but take care not to obstruct the hole by which the air

enters. We cannot risk being smothered in this ant-hill."

"We have only one night to spend here," replied old Tom.

"Well, let us try and make it recover us from our fatigue. This is the first time in ten days that we have not to sleep in the open air."

"Ten days!" repeated Tom.

"Besides," added Dick Sand, "as this cone forms a solid shelter, perhaps we had better stay here twenty-four hours. During that time, I will go in search of the stream that we are in need of; it cannot be very distant. I think that until we have constructed our raft, it will be better not to quit this shelter. The storm cannot reach us here. Let us make the floor stronger and dryer."

Dick Sand's orders were executed at once. Hercules, with his ax, crumbled the first story of cells, which was composed of crisp red clay. He thus raised, more than a foot, the interior part of the swampy earth on which the ant-hill rested, and Dick Sand made sure that the air could freely penetrate to the interior of the cone through the orifice pierced at its base.

It was, certainly, a fortunate circumstance that the ant-hill had been abandoned by the termites. With a few thousands of these ants, it would have been uninhabitable. But, had it been evacuated for some time, or had the voracious newroptera but just quitted it? It was not

superfluous to ponder this question.

Cousin Benedict was so much surprised at the abandonment, that he at once considered the reason for it, and he was soon convinced that the emigration had been recent.

In fact, he did not wait, but, descending to the lower part of the cone, and taking the lantern, he commenced to examine the most secret corners of the ant-hill. He thus discovered what is called the "general store-house" of the termites, that is to say, the place where these industrious insects lay up the provisions of the colony.

It was a cavity hollowed in the wall, not far from the royal cell, which Hercules's labor had destroyed, along with the cells destined for the young larvae.

In this store-room Cousin Benedict collected a certain quantity of particles of gum and the juices of plants, scarcely solidified, which proved that the termites had lately brought them from without.

"Well, no!" cried he. "No!" as if he were replying to some contradiction, "No, this ant-hill has not been long abandoned."

"Who says to the contrary, Mr. Benedict?" said Dick Sand. "Recently or not, the important thing for us is that the termites have left it, because we have to take their place."

"The important thing," replied Cousin Benedict, "will be to know why they have left it. Yesterday--this morning, perhaps--these sagacious newroptera were still here, because, see these liquid juices; and this evening----"

"Well, what do you conclude, Mr. Benedict?" asked Dick Sand.

"That a secret presentiment has caused them to abandon the cone. Not only have all the termites left their cells, but they have taken care to carry away the young larvae, of which I cannot find one. Well, I repeat that all this was not done without a motive, and that these sagacious insects foresaw some near danger."

"They foresaw that we were going to invade their dwelling," replied Hercules, laughing.

"Indeed!" replied Cousin Benedict, whom this answer sensibly shocked. "You think yourself so strong that you would be dangerous to these courageous insects? A few thousand of these newroptera would quickly reduce you to a skeleton if they found you dead on the road."

"Dead, certainly," replied Hercules, who would not give up; "but, living, I could crush masses of them."

"You might crush a hundred thousand, five hundred thousand, a million," replied Cousin Benedict, with animation, "but not a thousand millions; and a thousand millions would devour you, living or dead, to

the last morsel."

During this discussion, which was less trifling than might be supposed, Dick Sand reflected on the observations made by Cousin Benedict. There was no doubt that the savant knew too much about the habits of the termites to be mistaken. If he declared that a secret instinct warned them to leave the ant-hill recently, it was because there was truly peril in remaining in it.

Meanwhile, as it was impossible to abandon this shelter at a moment when the storm was raging with unparalleled intensity, Dick Sand looked no farther for an explanation of what seemed to be inexplicable, and he contented himself with saying:

"Well, Mr. Benedict, if the termites have left their provisions in this ant-hill, we must not forget that we have brought ours, and let us have supper. To-morrow, when the storm will be over, we will consult together on our future plans."

They then occupied themselves in preparing the evening meal, for, great as their fatigue was, it had not affected the appetite of these vigorous walkers. On the contrary, the food, which had to last for two more days, was very welcome. The damp had not reached the biscuits, and for several minutes it could be heard cracking under the solid teeth of Dick Sand and his companions. Between Hercules's jaws it was like grain under the miller's grindstone. It did not crackle, it powdered.

Mrs. Weldon alone scarcely eat, and even Dick Sand's entreaties were vain. It seemed to him that this brave woman was more preoccupied, more sad than she had been hitherto. Meanwhile her little Jack suffered less; the fever had not returned, and at this time he was sleeping, under his mother's eyes, in a cell well lined with garments. Dick Sand knew not what to think.

It is useless to say that Cousin Benedict did honor to the repast, not that he paid any attention either to the quality or to the quantity of the food that he devoured, but because he had found an opportunity to deliver a lecture in entomology on the termites. Ah! if he had been able to find a termite, a single one, in the deserted ant hill! But nothing.

"These admirable insects," said he, without taking the trouble to find out if any one were listening--"these admirable insects belong to the marvelous order of newroptera, whose horns are longer than the head, the jaws very distinct, and whose lower wings are generally equal to the upper ones. Five tribes constitute this order: the Panorpates (scorpion flies), the Myrmileoniens, the Hemerobins, the Termitines and the Perlides. It is useless to add that the insects which now interest us, and whose dwelling we occupy, perhaps unduly, are the Termitines."

At this moment Dick Sand listened very attentively to Cousin Benedict. Had the meeting with these termites excited in him the thought that he

was perhaps on the African continent, without knowing by what chance he had arrived there? The young novice was very anxious to find out.

The savant, mounted on his favorite hobby, continued to ride it beautifully.

"Now these termitines," said he, "are characterized by four joints on the instep, horned jaws, and remarkable strength. We have the mantispe species, the raphidie, and the termite species. The last is often known under the term of white ants, in which we count the deadly termite, the yellow corslet termite, the termite that shuns the light, the biter, the destroyer--"

"And those that constructed this ant-hill?" asked Dick Sand.

"They are the martial ants," replied Cousin Benedict, who pronounced this word as if it had been the Macedonians, or some other ancient people brave in war. "Yes, the warlike ants, and of all sizes. Between Hercules and a dwarf the difference would be less than between the largest of these insects and the smallest. Among them are 'workers' of five millimeters in length 'soldiers' of ten, and males and females of twenty. We find also a kind otherwise very curious: the sirafous half an inch in length, which have pincers for jaws, and a head larger than the body, like the sharks. They are the sharks among insects, and in a fight between some sirafous and a shark, I would bet on the sirafous."

"And where are these sirafous commonly observed?" then asked Dick Sand.

"In Africa," replied Cousin Benedict; "in the central and southern provinces. Africa is, in fact, the country of ants. You should read what Livingstone says of them in the last notes reported by Stanley. More fortunate than myself, the doctor has witnessed a Homeric battle, joined between an army of black ants and an army of red ants. The latter, which are called 'drivers,' and which the natives name sirafous, were victorious.

"The others, the 'tchoungous,' took flight, carrying their eggs and their young, not without having bravely defended themselves. Never, according to Livingstone, never was the spirit of battle carried farther, either among men or beasts! With their tenacious jaws, which tear out the piece, these sirafous make the bravest man recoil. The largest animals--even lions and elephants--flee before them.

"Nothing stops them; neither trees, which they climb to the summit, nor streams, which they cross by making a suspension bridge of their own bodies, hooked together. And numerous! Another African traveler--Du Chaillu--has seen a column of these ants defile past him for twelve hours without stopping on the road. But why be astonished at the sight of such myriads? The fecundity of these insects is surprising; and, to return to our fighting termites, it has been proved that a female deposits as much as sixty thousand eggs in a day! Besides, these newroptera furnish the natives with a juicy food.

Broiled ants, my friends; I know of nothing better in the world!"

"Have you then eaten them, Mr. Benedict?" asked Hercules.

"Never," replied the wise professor; "but I shall eat some."

"Where?"

"Here."

"Here; we are not in Africa!" said Tom, very quickly.

"No, no!" replied Cousin Benedict; "and, thus far, these warlike termites, and their villages of ant-hills, have only been observed on the African Continent. Ah! such travelers. They do not know how to see! Well! all the better, after all. I have discovered a tsetse in America. To the glory of this, I shall join that of having found the warlike termites on the same continent! What matter for an article that will make a sensation in educated Europe, and, perhaps, appear in folio form, with prints and engravings, besides the text!"

It was evident that the truth had not entered Cousin Benedict's brain. The poor man and all his companions, Dick Sand and Tom excepted, believed themselves, and must believe themselves, where they were not! It needed other incidents, facts still more grave than certain scientific curiosities, to undeceive them!

It was then nine o'clock in the morning. Cousin Benedict had talked for a long time. Did he perceive that his auditors, propped up in their cells, had gradually fallen asleep during his entomological lecture? No; certainly not. He lectured for himself. Dick Sand no longer questioned him, and remained motionless, although he did not sleep. As for Hercules, he had resisted longer than the others; but fatigue soon finished by shutting his eyes, and, with his eyes, his ears.

For some time longer Cousin Benedict continued to lecture. However, sleep finally got the best of him, and he mounted to the upper cavity of the cone, in which he had chosen his domicile.

Deep silence fell on the interior of the cone, while the storm filled space with noise and fire. Nothing seemed to indicate that the tempest was nearly over.

The lantern had been extinguished. The interior of the ant-hill was plunged in complete darkness.

No doubt all slept. However, Dick Sand, alone, did not seek in sleep the repose which was so necessary to him. Thought absorbed him. He dreamed of his companions, whom he would save at all hazards. The wrecking of the "Pilgrim" had not been the end of their cruel trials, and others, still more terrible, threatened them should they fall into the hands of these natives.

And how to avoid this danger, the worst of all, during their return to the coast. Harris and Negoro had not led them a hundred miles into the interior of Angola without a secret design to gain possession of them.

But what did this miserable Portuguese intend? Who had merited his hatred? The young novice repeated to himself, that he alone had incurred it. Then he passed in review all the incidents that had taken place during the "Pilgrim's" voyage; the meeting with the wreck and the blacks; the pursuit of the whale; the disappearance of Captain Hull and his crew.

Dick Sand had found himself, at the age of fifteen, intrusted with the command of a vessel, the compass and log of which were soon injured by Negoro's criminal actions. He again saw himself using his authority in the presence of this insolent cook, threatening to put him in irons, or to blow out his brains with a pistol shot. Ah, why had he hesitated to do it? Negoro's corpse would have been thrown overboard, and none of these catastrophes would have happened.

Such were the young man's various thoughts. Then they dwelt a moment on the shipwreck which had ended the "Pilgrim's" voyage. The traitor Harris appeared then, and this province of South America gradually became transformed. Bolivia changed to the terrible Angola, with its feverish climate, its savage deer, its natives still more cruel. Could the little party escape during its return to the coast? This river which he was seeking, which he hoped to find, would it conduct them to the shore with more safety, and with less fatigue? He would not doubt

it, for he knew well that a march of a hundred miles through this inhospitable country, in the midst of incessant dangers, was no longer possible.

"Happily," he said to himself, "Mrs. Weldon and all are ignorant of the danger of the situation. Old Tom and I, we alone are to know that Negoro has thrown us on the coast of Africa; and that Harris has led me into the wilds of Angola."

Dick Sand was thus sunk in overpowering thoughts, when he felt a breath on his forehead. A hand rested on his shoulder, and a trembling voice murmured these words in his ear:

"I know all, my poor Dick, but God can yet save us! His will be done!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE DIVING-BELL.

To this unexpected revelation Dick Sand could not reply. Besides, Mrs. Weldon had gone back at once to her place beside little Jack. She evidently did not wish to say any more about it, and the young novice had not the courage to detain her.

Thus Mrs. Weldon knew what to believe. The various incidents, of the way had enlightened her also, and perhaps, too, that word, "Africa!" so unluckily pronounced the night before by Cousin Benedict.

"Mrs. Weldon knows everything," repeated Dick Sand to himself. "Well, perhaps it is better so. The brave woman does not despair. I shall not despair either."

Dick Sand now longed for day to return, that he might explore the surroundings of this termite village. He must find a tributary of the Atlantic with a rapid course to transport all his little troop. He had a presentiment that this watercourse could not be far distant. Above all, they must avoid an encounter with the natives, perhaps already sent in pursuit of them under Harris's and Negoro's direction.

But it was not day yet. No light made its way into the cone through the lower orifice. Rumblings, rendered low by the thickness of the

walls, indicated that the storm still raged. Listening, Dick Sand also heard the rain falling with violence at the base of the ant-hill. As the large drops no longer struck a hard soil, he must conclude that the whole plain was inundated.

It must have been about eleven o'clock. Dick Sand then felt that a kind of torpor, if not a true sleep, was going to overcome him. It would, however, be rest. But, just as he was yielding to it, the thought came to him that, by the settling of the clay, washed in, the lower orifice was likely to be obstructed. All passage for the outer air would be closed. Within, the respiration of ten persons would soon vitiate the air by loading it with carbonic acid.

Dick Sand then slipped to the ground, which had been raised by the clay from the first floor of cells.

That cushion was still perfectly dry, and the orifice entirely free. The air penetrated freely to the interior of the cone, and with it some flashes of lightning, and the loud noises of that storm, that a diluvian rain could not extinguish.

Dick Sand saw that all was well. No immediate danger seemed to menace these human termites, substituted for the colony of newroptera. The young novice then thought of refreshing himself by a few hours' sleep, as he already felt its influence. Only with supreme precaution Dick Sand lay on that bed of clay, at the bottom of the cone, near the narrow edifice.

By this means, if any accident happened outside, he would be the first to remark it. The rising day would also awaken him, and he would be ready to begin the exploration of the plain.

Dick Sand lay down then, his head against the wall, his gun under his hand, and almost immediately he was asleep.

How long this drowsiness lasted he could not tell, when he was awakened by a lively sensation of coolness.

He rose and recognized, not without great anxiety, that the water was invading the ant hill, and even so rapidly, that in a few seconds it would reach the story of cells occupied by Tom and Hercules.

The latter, awakened by Dick Sand, were told about this new complication.

The lighted lantern soon showed the interior of the cone.

The water had stopped at a height of about five feet, and remained stationary.

"What is the matter, Dick?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"It is nothing," replied the young novice. "The lower part of the cone has been inundated. It is probably that during this storm a

neighboring river has overflowed on this plain."

"Good!" said Hercules; "that proves the river is there!"

"Yes," replied Dick Sand, "and it will carry us to the coast. Be reassured, then, Mrs. Weldon; the water cannot reach you, nor little Jack, nor Nan, nor Mr. Benedict."

Mrs. Weldon did not reply. As to the cousin, he slept like a veritable termite.

Meanwhile the blacks, leaning over this sheet of water, which reflected the lantern's light, waited for Dick Sand to indicate to them what should be done. He was measuring the height of the inundation.

After having the provisions and arms put out of the reach of the inundation, Dick Sand was silent.

"The water has penetrated by the orifice," said Tom.

"Yes," replied Dick Sand, "and now it prevents the interior air from being renewed."

"Could we not make a hole in the wall above the level of the water?" asked the old black.

"Doubtless, Tom; but if we have five feet of water within, there are perhaps six or seven, even more, without."

"You think, Mr. Dick--?"

"I think, Tom, that the water, rising inside the ant-hill, has compressed the air in the upper part, and that this air now makes an obstacle to prevent the water from rising higher. But if we pierce a hole in the wall by which the air would escape, either the water would still rise till it reached the outside level, or if it passed the hole, it would rise to that point where the compressed air would again keep it back. We must be here like workmen in a diving-bell."

"What must be done?" asked Tom.

"Reflect well before acting," replied Dick Sand. "An imprudence might cost us our lives!"

The young novice's observation was very true.

In comparing the cone to a submerged bell, he was right. Only in that apparatus the air is constantly renewed by means of pumps. The divers breathe comfortably, and they suffer no other inconveniences than those resulting from a prolonged sojourn in a compressed atmosphere, no longer at a normal pressure.

But here, beside those inconveniences, space was already reduced a

third by the invasion of the water. As to the air, it would only be renewed if they put it in communication with the outer atmosphere by means of a hole.

Could they, without running the danger spoken of by Dick Sand, pierce that hole? Would not the situation be aggravated by it?

What was certain was, that the water now rested at a level which only two causes could make it exceed, namely: if they pierced a hole, and the level of the rising waters was higher outside, or if the height of this rising water should still increase. In either of these cases, only a narrow space would remain inside the cone, where the air, not renewed, would be still more compressed.

But might not the ant-hill be torn from the ground and overthrown by the inundation, to the extreme danger of those within it? No, no more than a beaver's hut, so firmly did it adhere by its base.

Then, the event most to be feared was the persistence of the storm, and, consequently, the increase of the inundation. Thirty feet of water on the plain would cover the cone with eighteen feet of water, and bear on the air within with the pressure of an atmosphere.

Now, after reflecting well upon it, Dick Sand was led to fear that this inundation might increase considerably.

In fact, it could not be due solely to that deluge poured out by

the clouds. It seemed more probable that a neighboring watercourse, swelled by the storm, had burst its banks, and was spreading over this plain lying below it. What proof had they that the ant-hill was not then entirely submerged, and that it was full time to leave it by the top part, which would not be difficult to demolish?

Dick Sand, now extremely anxious, asked himself what he ought to do. Must he wait or suddenly announce the probable result of the situation, after ascertaining the condition of things?

It was then three o'clock in the morning. All, motionless, silent, listened. The noise from outside came very feebly through the obstructed orifice. All the time a dull sound, strong and continued, well indicated that the contest of the elements had not ceased.

At that moment old Tom observed that the water level was gradually rising.

"Yes," replied Dick Sand, "and if it rises, as the air cannot escape from within, it is because the rising of the waters increases and presses it more and more."

"It is but slight so far," said Tom.

"Without doubt," replied Dick Sand; "but where will this level stop?"

"Mr. Dick," asked Bat, "would you like me to go out of the ant-hill?

By diving, I should try to slip out by the hole."

"It will be better for me to try it," replied Dick Sand.

"No, Mr. Dick, no," replied old Tom, quickly; "let my son do it, and trust to his skill. In case he could not return, your presence is necessary here."

Then, lower:

"Do not forget Mrs. Weldon and little Jack."

"Be it so," replied Dick Sand. "Go, then, Bat. If the ant-hill is submerged, do not seek to enter it again. We shall try to come out as you will have done. But if the cone still emerges, strike on its top with the ax that you will take with you. We will hear you, and it will be the signal for us to demolish the top from our side. You understand?"

"Yes, Mr. Dick," replied Bat.

"Go, then, boy," added old Tom, pressing his son's hand.

Bat, after laying in a good provision of air by a long aspiration, plunged under the liquid mass, whose depth then exceeded five feet. It was a rather difficult task, because he would have to seek the lower orifice, slip through it, and then rise to the outside surface of the

waters.

That must be done quickly.

Nearly half a minute passed away. Dick Sand then thought that Bat had succeeded in passing outside when the black emerged.

"Well!" exclaimed Dick Sand.

"The hole is stopped up by rubbish!" replied Bat, as soon as he could take breath.

"Stopped up!" repeated Tom.

"Yes," replied Bat. "The water has probably diluted the clay. I have felt around the walls with my hand. There is no longer any hole."

Dick Sand shook his head. His companions and he were hermetically sequestered in this cone, perhaps submerged by the water.

"If there is no longer any hole," then said Hercules, "we must make one."

"Wait," replied the young novice, stopping Hercules, who, hatchet in hand, was preparing to dive.

Dick Sand reflected for a few moments, and then he said:

"We are going to proceed in another manner. The whole question is to know whether the water covers the ant-hill or not. If we make a small opening at the summit of the cone, we shall find out which it is. But in case the ant-hill should be submerged now, the water would fill it entirely, and we would be lost. Let us feel our way."

"But quickly," replied Tom.

In fact, the level continued to rise gradually. There were then six feet of water inside the cone. With the exception of Mrs. Weldon, her son, Cousin Benedict, and Nan, who had taken refuge in the upper cavities, all were immersed to the waist.

Then there was a necessity for quick action, as Dick Sand proposed.

It was one foot above the interior level, consequently seven feet from the ground, that Dick Sand resolved to pierce a hole in the clay wall.

If, by this hole, they were in communication with the outer air, the cone emerges. If, on the contrary, this hole was pierced below the water level outside, the air would be driven inward, and in that case they must stop it up at once, or the water would rise to its orifice. Then they would commence again a foot higher, and so on. If, at last, at the top, they did not yet find the outer air, it was because there was a depth of more than fifteen feet of water in the plain, and that the whole termite village had disappeared under the inundation. Then

what chance had the prisoners in the ant-hill to escape the most terrible of deaths, death by slow asphyxia?

Dick Sand knew all that, but he did not lose his presence of mind for a moment. He had closely calculated the consequences of the experiment he wished to try. Besides, to wait longer was not possible. Asphyxia was threatening in this narrow space, reduced every moment, in a medium already saturated with carbonic acid.

The best tool Dick Sand could employ to pierce a hole through the wall was a ramrod furnished with a screw, intended to draw the wadding from a gun. By making it turn rapidly, this screw scooped out the clay like an auger, and the hole was made little by little. Then it would not have a larger diameter than that of the ramrod, but that would be sufficient. The air could come through very well.

Hercules holding up the lantern lighted Dick Sand. They had some wax candles to take its place, and they had not to fear lack of light from that source.

A minute after the beginning of the operation, the ramrod went freely through the wall. At once a rather dull noise was produced, resembling that made by globules of air escaping through a column of water. The air escaped, and, at the same moment, the level of the water rose in the cone, and stopped at the height of the hole. This proved that they had pierced too low--that is to say, below the liquid mass.

"Begin again," the young novice said, coolly, after rapidly stopping the hole with a handful of clay.

The water was again stationary in the cone, but the reserved space had diminished more than eight inches. Respiration became difficult, for the oxygen was beginning to fail. They saw it also by the lantern's light, which reddened and lost a part of its brightness.

One foot above the first hole, Dick Sand began at once to pierce a second by the same process. If the experiment failed, the water would rise still higher inside the cone--but that risk must be run.

While Dick Sand was working his auger, they heard Cousin Benedict cry out, suddenly:

"Mercy! look--look--look why!"

Hercules raised his lantern and threw its light on Cousin Benedict, whose face expressed the most perfect satisfaction.

"Yes," repeated he, "look why those intelligent termites have abandoned the ant-hill! They had felt the inundation beforehand. Ah! instinct, my friends, instinct. The termites are wiser than we are, much wiser."

And that was all the moral Cousin Benedict drew from the situation.

At that moment Dick Sand drew out the ramrod, which had penetrated the wall. A hissing was produced. The water rose another foot inside the cone--the hole had not reached the open air outside.

The situation was dreadful. Mrs. Weldon, then almost reached by the water, had raised little Jack in her arms. All were stifling in this narrow space. Their ears buzzed.

The lantern only threw a faint light.

"Is the cone, then, entirely under water?" murmured Dick Sand.

He must know; and, in order to know, he must pierce a third hole, at the very top.

But it was asphyxia, it was immediate death, if the result of this last attempt should prove fruitless. The air remaining inside would escape through the upper sheet of water, and the water would fill the whole cone.

"Mrs. Weldon," then said Dick Sand, "you know the situation. If we delay, respirable air will fail us. If the third attempt fails, water will fill all this space. Our only chance is that the summit of the cone is above the level of the inundation. We must try this last experiment. Are you willing?"

"Do it, Dick!" replied Mrs. Weldon.

At that moment the lantern went out in that medium already unfit for combustion. Mrs. Weldon and her companions were plunged in the most complete darkness.

Dick Sand was perched on Hercules's shoulders. The latter was hanging on to one of the lateral cavities. Only his head was above the bed of water.

Mrs. Weldon, Jack, and Cousin Benedict were in the last story of cells.

Dick Sand scratched the wall, and his ramrod pierced the clay rapidly. In this place the wall, being thicker and harder also, was more difficult to penetrate. Dick Sand hastened, not without terrible anxiety, for by this narrow opening either life was going to penetrate with the air, or with the water it was death.

Suddenly a sharp hissing was heard. The compressed air escaped--but a ray of daylight filtered through the wall. The water only rose eight inches, and stopped, without Dick Sand being obliged to close the hole. The equilibrium was established between the level within and that outside. The summit of the cone emerged. Mrs. Weldon and her companions were saved.

At once, after a frantic hurra, in which Hercules's thundering voice prevailed, the cutlasses were put to work. The summit, quickly

attacked, gradually crumbled. The hole was enlarged, the pure air entered in waves, and with it the first rays of the rising sun. The top once taken off the cone, it would be easy to hoist themselves on to its wall, and they would devise means of reaching some neighboring height, above all inundations.

Dick Sand first mounted to the summit of the cone.

A cry escaped him.

That particular noise, too well known by African travelers, the whizzing of arrows, passed through the air.

Dick Sand had had time to perceive a camp a hundred feet from the ant-hill, and ten feet from the cone, on the inundated plain, long boats, filled with natives.

It was from one of those boats that the flight of arrows had come the moment the young novice's head appeared out of the hole.

Dick Sand, in a word, had told all to his companions. Seizing his gun, followed by Hercules, Acteon, and Bat, he reappeared at the summit of the cone, and all fired on one of the boats.

Several natives fell, and yells, accompanied by shots, replied to the detonation of the fire-arms.

But what could Dick Sand and his companions do against a hundred Africans, who surrounded them on all sides?

The ant-hill was assailed. Mrs. Weldon, her child, and Cousin Benedict, all were brutally snatched from it, and without having had time to speak to each other or to shake hands for the last time, they saw themselves separated from each other, doubtless in virtue of orders previously given.

A last boat took away Mrs. Weldon, little Jack and Cousin Benedict. Dick Sand saw them disappear in the middle of the camp.

As to him, accompanied by Nan, Old Tom, Hercules, Bat, Acteon and Austin, he was thrown into a second boat, which went toward another point of the hill.

Twenty natives entered this boat.

It was followed by five others.

Resistance was not possible, and nevertheless, Dick Sand and his companions attempted it. Some soldiers of the caravan were wounded by them, and certainly they would have paid for this resistance with their lives, if there had not been a formal order to spare them.

In a few minutes, the passage was made. But just as the boat landed, Hercules, with an irresistible bound, sprang on the ground. Two

natives having sprung on him, the giant turned his gun like a club, and the natives fell, with their skulls broken.

A moment after, Hercules disappeared under the cover of the trees, in the midst of a shower of balls, as Dick Sand and his companions, having been put on land, were chained like slaves.

CHAPTER VII.

IN CAMP ON THE BANKS OF THE COANZA.

The aspect of the country was entirely changed since the inundation. It had made a lake of the plain where the termite village stood. The cones of twenty ant-hills emerged, and formed the only projecting points on this large basin.

The Coanza had overflowed during the night, with the waters of its tributaries swelled by the storm.

This Coanza, one of the rivers of Angola, flows into the Atlantic, a hundred miles from the cape where the "Pilgrim" was wrecked. It was this river that Lieutenant Cameron had to cross some years later, before reaching Benguela. The Coanza is intended to become the vehicle for the interior transit of this portion of the Portuguese colony. Already steamers ascend its lower course, and before ten years elapse, they will ply over its upper bed. Dick Sand had then acted wisely in seeking some navigable river toward the north. The rivulet he had followed had just been emptied into the Coanza. Only for this sudden attack, of which he had had no intimation to put him on his guard, he would have found the Coanza a mile farther on. His companions and he would have embarked on a raft, easily constructed, and they would have had a good chance to descend the stream to the Portuguese villages, where the steamers come into port. There, their safety would be

secured.

It would not be so.

The camp, perceived by Dick Sand, was established on an elevation near the ant-hill, into which fate had thrown him, as in a trap. At the summit of that elevation rose an enormous sycamore fig-tree, which would easily shelter five hundred men under its immense branches. Those who have not seen those giant trees of Central Africa, can form no idea of them. Their branches form a forest, and one could be lost in it. Farther on, great banyans, of the kind whose seeds do not change into fruits, completed the outline of this vast landscape.

It was under the sycamore's shelter, hidden, as in a mysterious asylum, that a whole caravan--the one whose arrival Harris had announced to Negoro--had just halted. This numerous procession of natives, snatched from their villages by the trader Alvez's agents, were going to the Kazounde market. Thence the slaves, as needed, would be sent either to the barracks of the west coast, or to N'yangwe, toward the great lake region, to be distributed either in upper Egypt, or in the factories of Zanzibar.

As soon as they arrived at the camp, Dick Sand and his companions had been treated as slaves. Old Tom, his son Austin, Acteon, poor Nan, negroes by birth, though they did not belong to the African race, were treated like captive natives. After they were disarmed, in spite of the strongest resistance, they were held by the throat, two by two, by

means of a pole six or seven feet long, forked at each end, and closed by an iron rod. By this means they were forced to march in line, one behind the other, unable to get away either to the right or to the left. As an over precaution, a heavy chain was attached to their waists. They had their arms free, to carry burdens, their feet free to march, but they could not use them to flee. Thus they were going to travel hundreds of miles under an overseer's lash. Placed apart, overcome by the reaction which followed the first moments of their struggle against the negroes, they no longer made a movement. Why had they not been able to follow Hercules in his flight? And, meanwhile, what could they hope for the fugitive? Strong as he was, what would become of him in that inhospitable country, where hunger, solitude, savage beasts, natives, all were against him? Would he not soon regret his companion's fate? They, however, had no pity to expect from the chiefs of the caravan, Arabs or Portuguese, speaking a language they could not understand. These chiefs only entered into communication with their prisoners by menacing looks and gestures.

Dick Sand himself was not coupled with any other slave. He was a white man, and probably they had not dared to inflict the common treatment on him. Unarmed, he had his feet and hands free, but a driver watched him especially. He observed the camp, expecting each moment to see Negoro or Harris appear. His expectation was in vain. He had no doubt, however, that those two miserable men had directed the attack against the ant-hill.

Thus the thought came to him that Mrs. Weldon, little Jack, and Cousin

Benedict had been led away separately by orders from the American or from the Portuguese. Seeing neither one nor the other, he said to himself that perhaps the two accomplices even accompanied their victims. Where were they leading them? What would they do with them? It was his most cruel care. Dick Sand forgot his own situation to think only of Mrs. Weldon and hers.

The caravan, camped under the gigantic sycamore, did not count less than eight hundred persons, say five hundred slaves of both sexes, two hundred soldiers, porters, marauders, guards, drivers, agents, or chiefs.

These chiefs were of Arab and Portugese origin. It would be difficult to imagine the cruelties that these inhuman beings inflicted on their captives. They struck them without relaxation, and those who fell exhausted, not fit to be sold, were finished with gunshots or the knife. Thus they hold them by terror. But the result of this system is, that on the arrival of the caravan, fifty out of a hundred slaves are missing from the trader's list. A few may have escaped, but the bones of those who died from torture mark out the long routes from the interior to the coast.

It is supposed that the agents of European origin, Portuguese for the most part, are only rascals whom their country has rejected, convicts, escaped prisoners, old slave-drivers whom the authorities have been unable to hang--in a word, the refuse of humanity. Such was Negoro, such was Harris, now in the service of one of the greatest contractors

of Central Africa, Jose-Antonio Alvez, well known by the traders of the province, about whom Lieutenant Cameron has given some curious information.

The soldiers who escort the captives are generally natives in the pay of the traders. But the latter have not the monopoly of those raids which procure the slaves for them. The negro kings also make atrocious wars with each other, and with the same object. Then the vanquished adults, the women and children, reduced to slavery, are sold by the vanquishers for a few yards of calico, some powder, a few firearms, pink or red pearls, and often even, as Livingstone says, in periods of famine, for a few grains of maize.

The soldiers who escorted old Alvez's caravan might give a true idea of what African armies are.

It was an assemblage of negro bandits, hardly clothed, who brandished long flint-lock guns, the gun-barrels garnished with a great number of copper rings. With such an escort, to which are joined marauders who are no better, the agents often have all they can do. They dispute orders, they insist on their own halting places and hours, they threaten to desert, and it is not rare for the agents to be forced to yield to the exactions of this soldiery.

Though the slaves, men or women, are generally subjected to carry burdens while the caravan is on the march, yet a certain number of porters accompany it. They are called more particularly "Pagazis," and

they carry bundles of precious objects, principally ivory. Such is the size of these elephants' teeth sometimes, of which some weigh as much as one hundred and sixty pounds, that it takes two of these "Pagazis" to carry them to the factories. Thence this precious merchandise is exported to the markets of Khartoum, of Zanzibar and Natal.

On arriving, these "Pagazis" are paid the price agreed upon. It consists in twenty yards of cotton cloth, or of that stuff which bears the name of "Merikani," a little powder, a handful of cowry (shells very common in that country, which serve as money), a few pearls, or even those of the slaves who would be difficult to sell. The slaves are paid, when the trader has no other money.

Among the five hundred slaves that the caravan counted, there were few grown men. That is because, the "Razzia" being finished and the village set on fire, every native above forty is unmercifully massacred and hung to a neighboring tree. Only the young adults of both sexes and the children are intended to furnish the markets. After these men-hunts, hardly a tenth of the vanquished survive. This explains the frightful depopulation which changes vast territories of equatorial Africa into deserts.

Here, the children and the adults were hardly clothed with a rag of that bark stuff, produced by certain trees, and called "mbouzon" in the country. Thus the state of this troop of human beings, women covered with wounds from the "havildars'" whips, children ghastly and meager, with bleeding feet, whom their mothers tried to carry in

addition to their burdens, young men closely riveted to the fork, more torturing than the convict's chain, is the most lamentable that can be imagined.

Yes, the sight of the miserable people, hardly living, whose voices have no sound, ebony skeletons according to Livingstone's expression, would touch the hearts of wild beasts. But so much misery did not touch those hardened Arabs nor those Portuguese, who, according to Lieutenant Cameron, are still more cruel. This is what Cameron says: "To obtain these fifty women, of whom Alvez called himself proprietor, ten villages had been destroyed, ten villages having each from one hundred to two hundred souls: a total of fifteen hundred inhabitants. Some had been able to escape, but the greater part--almost all--had perished in the flames, had been killed in defending their families, or had died of hunger in the jungle, unless the beasts of prey had terminated their sufferings more promptly.

"Those crimes, perpetrated in the center of Africa by men who boast of the name of Christians, and consider themselves Portuguese, would seem incredible to the inhabitants of civilized countries. It is impossible that the government of Lisbon knows the atrocities committed by people who boast of being her subjects." --Tour of the World.

In Portugal there have been very warm protestations against these assertions of Cameron's.

It need not be said that, during the marches, as during the halts, the

prisoners were very carefully guarded. Thus, Dick Sand soon understood that he must not even attempt to get away. But then, how find Mrs. Weldon again? That she and her child had been carried away by Negoro was only too certain. The Portuguese had separated her from her companions for reasons unknown as yet to the young novice. But he could not doubt Negoro's intervention, and his heart was breaking at the thought of the dangers of all kinds which threatened Mrs. Weldon.

"Ah!" he said to himself, "when I think that I have held those two miserable men, both of them, at the end of my gun, and that I have not killed them!"

This thought was one of those which returned most persistently to Dick Sand's mind. What misfortunes the death, the just death of Harris and Negoro might have prevented! What misery, at least, for those whom these brokers in human flesh were now treating as slaves!

All the horror of Mrs. Weldon's and little Jack's situation now represented itself to Dick Sand. Neither the mother nor the child could count on Cousin Benedict. The poor man could hardly take care of himself.

Doubtless they were taking all three to some district remote from the province of Angola. But who was carrying the still sick child?

"His mother; yes, his mother," Dick Sand repeated to himself. "She will have recovered strength for him; she will have done what these

unhappy female slaves do, and she will fall like them. Ah! may God put me again in front of her executioners, and I--"

But he was a prisoner! He counted one head in this live-stock that the overseers were driving to the interior of Africa. He did not even know whether Negoro and Harris themselves were directing the convoy of which their victims made a part. Dingo was no longer there to scent the Portuguese, to announce his approach. Hercules alone might come to the assistance of the unfortunate Mrs. Weldon. But was that miracle to be hoped for?

However, Dick Sand fell back again on that idea. He said to himself that the strong black man was free. Of his devotion there was no doubt. All that a human being could do, Hercules would do in Mrs. Weldon's interest. Yes, either Hercules would try to find them and put himself in communication with them; or if that failed him, he would endeavor to concert with him, Dick Sand, and perhaps carry him off, deliver him by force. During the night halts, mingling with these prisoners, black like them, could he not deceive the soldier's vigilance, reach him, break his bonds, and lead him away into the forest? And both of them, then free, what would they not do for Mrs. Weldon's safety. A water course would enable them to descend to the coast. Dick Sand would again take up that plan so unfortunately prevented by the natives' attack, with new chances of success and a greater knowledge of the difficulties.

The young novice thus alternated between fear and hope. In fact, he

resisted despair, thanks to his energetic nature, and held himself in readiness to profit by the least chance that might offer itself to him.

What he most desired to know was to what market the agents were taking the convoy of slaves. Was it to one of the factories of Angola, and would it be an affair of a few halting-places only, or would this convoy travel for hundreds of miles still, across Central Africa? The principal market of the contractors is that of N'yangwe, in Manyema, on that meridian which divides the African continent into two almost equal parts, there where extends the country of the great lakes, that Livingstone was then traversing. But it was far from the camp on the Coanza to that village. Months of travel would not suffice to reach it.

That was one of Dick Sand's most serious thoughts; for, once at N'yangwe, in case even Mrs. Weldon, Hercules, the other blacks and he should succeed in escaping, how difficult it would be, not to say impossible, to return to the seacoast, in the midst of the dangers of such a long route.

But Dick Sand soon had reason to think that the convoy would soon reach its destination. Though he did not understand the language employed by the chiefs of the caravan, sometimes Arab, sometimes the African idiom, he remarked that the name of an important market of that region was often pronounced. It was the name Kazounde, and he knew that a very great trade in slaves was carried on there. He was

then naturally led to believe that there the fate of the prisoners would be decided, whether for the profit of the king of that district or for the benefit of some rich trader of the country. We know that he was not mistaken.

Now, Dick Sand, being posted in the facts of modern geography, knew very exactly what is known of Kazounde. The distance from Saint Paul de Loanda to this city does not exceed four hundred miles, and consequently two hundred and fifty miles, at the most, separates it from the camp established on the Coanza. Dick Sand made his calculation approximately, taking the distance traveled by the little troop under Harris's lead as the base. Now, under ordinary circumstances, this journey would only require from ten to twelve days. Doubling that time for the needs of a caravan already exhausted by a long route, Dick Sand might estimate the length of the journey from the Coanza to Kazounde at three weeks.

Dick Sand wished very much to impart what he believed he knew to Tom and his companions. It would be a kind of consolation for them to be assured that they were not being led to the center of Africa, into those fatal countries which they could not hope to leave. Now, a few words uttered in passing would be sufficient to enlighten them. Would he succeed in saying those words?

Tom and Bat--chance had reunited the father and son--Acteon and Austin, forked two by two, were at the right extremity of the camp. An overseer and a dozen soldiers watched them.

Dick Sand, free in his movements, resolved to gradually diminish the distance that separated him from his companions to fifty steps. He then commenced to maneuver to that end.

Very likely old Tom divined Dick Sand's thought. A word, pronounced in a low voice, warned his companions to be attentive. They did not stir, but they kept themselves ready to see, as well as to hear.

Soon, with an indifferent air, Dick Sand had gained fifty steps more. From the place where he then was, he could have called out, in such a manner as to be heard, that name Kazounde, and tell them what the probable length of the journey would be. But to complete his instructions, and confer with them on their conduct during the journey, would be still better. He then continued to draw nearer to them. Already his heart was beating with hope; he was only a few steps from the desired end, when the overseer, as if he had suddenly penetrated his intention, rushed on him. At the cries of that enraged person, ten soldiers ran to the spot, and Dick Sand was brutally led back to the rear, while Tom and his companions were taken to the other extremity of the camp.

Exasperated, Dick Sand had thrown himself upon the overseer. He had ended by breaking his gun in his hands. He had almost succeeded in snatching it from him. But seven or eight soldiers assailed him at once, and force was used to secure him. Furious, they would have massacred him, if one of the chiefs of the caravan, an Arab of great

height and ferocious physiognomy, had not intervened. This Arab was the chief Ibn Hamis, of whom Harris had spoken. He pronounced a few words which Dick Sand could not understand, and the soldiers, obliged to release their prey, went away.

It was, then, very evident, for one thing, that there had been a formal order not to allow the young novice to communicate with his companions; and for another, that his life should not be taken.

Who could have given such orders, if not Harris or Negoro?

At that moment--it was nine o'clock in the morning, April 19th--the harsh sounds from a "condou's" horn (a kind of ruminating animal among the African deer) burst forth, and the drum was heard. The halt was going to end.

All, chiefs, porters, soldiers, slaves, were immediately on foot. Laden with their packs, several groups of captives were formed under the leadership of an overseer, who unfurled a banner of bright colors.

The signal for departure was given. Songs then rose on the air; but they were the vanquished, not the vanquishers, who sang thus.

This is what they said in these songs--a threatening expression of a simple faith from the slaves against their oppressors--against their executioners:

"You have sent me to the coast, but I shall be dead; I shall have a yoke no longer, and I shall return to kill you."

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME OF DICK SAND'S NOTES.

Though the storm of the day before had ceased, the weather was still very unsettled. It was, besides, the period of the "masika," the second period of the rainy season, under this zone of the African heaven. The nights in particular would be rainy during one, two, or three weeks, which could only increase the misery of the caravan.

It set out that day in cloudy weather, and, after quitting the banks of the Coanza, made its way almost directly to the east. Fifty soldiers marched at the head, a hundred on each of the two sides of the convoy, the rest as a rear-guard. It would be difficult for the prisoners to flee, even if they had not been chained. Women, children, and men were going pell-mell, and the overseers urged them on with the whip. There were unfortunate mothers who, nursing one child, held a second by the hand that was free. Others dragged these little beings along, without clothing, without shoes, on the sharp grasses of the soil.

The chief of the caravan, that ferocious Ibn Hamis, who had interfered in the struggle between Dick Sand and his overseer, watched this whole troop, going backwards and forwards from the head to the foot of the long column. If his agents and he troubled themselves but little about the sufferings of their captives, they must reckon more seriously

either with the soldiers who claimed some additional rations, or with the "pagazis" who wanted to halt. Thence discussions; often even an exchange of brutality. The slaves suffered more from the overseers' constant irritation. Nothing was heard but threats from one side, and cries of grief from the other. Those who marched in the last ranks treaded a soil that the first had stained with their blood.

Dick Sand's companions, always carefully kept in front of the convoy, could have no communication with him. They advanced in file, the neck held in the heavy fork, which did not permit a single head-movement. The whips did not spare them any more than their sad companions in misfortune.

Bat, coupled with his father, marched before him, taxing his ingenuity not to shake the fork, choosing the best places to step on, because old Tom must pass after him. From time to time, when the overseer was a little behind, he uttered various words of encouragement, some of which reached Tom. He even tried to retard his march, if he felt that Tom was getting tired. It was suffering, for this good son to be unable to turn his head towards his good father, whom he loved. Doubtless, Tom had the satisfaction of seeing his son; however, he paid dear for it. How many times great tears flowed from his eyes when the overseer's whip fell upon Bat! It was a worse punishment than if it had fallen on his own flesh.

Austin and Acteon marched a few steps behind, tied to each other, and brutally treated every moment. Ah, how they envied Hercules's fate!

Whatever were the dangers that threatened the latter in that savage country, he could at least use his strength and defend his life.

During the first moments of their captivity, old Tom had finally made known the whole truth to his companions. They had learned from him, to their profound astonishment, that they were in Africa; that Negoro's and Harris's double treachery had first thrown them there, and then led them away, and that no pity was to be expected from their masters.

Nan was not better treated. She made part of a group of women who occupied the middle of the convoy. They had chained her with a young mother of two children, one at the breast, the other aged three years, who walked with difficulty. Nan, moved with pity, had burdened herself with the little creature, and the poor slave had thanked her by a tear. Nan then carried the infant, at the same time, sparing her the fatigue, to which she would have yielded, and the blows the overseer would have given her. But it was a heavy burden for old Nan. She felt that her strength would soon fail her, and then she thought of little Jack. She pictured him to herself in his mother's arms. Sickness had wasted him very much, but he must be still heavy for Mrs. Weldon's weakened arms. Where was she? What would become of her? Would her old servant ever see her again?

Dick Sand had been placed almost in the rear of the convoy. He could neither perceive Tom, nor his companions, nor Nan. The head of the long caravan was only visible to him when it was crossing some plain. He walked, a prey, to the saddest thoughts, from which the agents'

cries hardly drew his attention. He neither thought of himself, nor the fatigues he must still support, nor of the tortures probably reserved for him by Negoro. He only thought of Mrs. Weldon. In rain he sought on the ground, on the brambles by the paths, on the lower branches of the trees, to find some trace of her passage. She could not have taken another road, if, as everything indicated, they were leading her to Kazounde. What would he not give to find some indication of her march to the destination where they themselves were being led!

Such was the situation of the young novice and his companions in body and mind. But whatever they might have to fear for themselves, great as was their own sufferings, pity took possession of them on seeing the frightful misery of that sad troop of captives, and the revolting brutality of their masters. Alas! they could do nothing to succor the afflicted, nothing to resist the others.

All the country situated east of the Coanza was only a forest for over an extent of twenty miles. The trees, however, whether they perish under the biting of the numerous insects of these countries, or whether troops of elephants beat them down while they are still young, are less crowded here than in the country next to the seacoast. The march, then, under the trees, would not present obstacles. The shrubs might be more troublesome than the trees. There was, in fact, an abundance of those cotton-trees, seven to eight feet high, the cotton of which serves to manufacture the black and white striped stuffs used in the interior of the province.

In certain places, the soil transformed itself into thick jungles, in which the convoy disappeared. Of all the animals of the country, the elephants and giraffes alone were taller than those reeds which resemble bamboos, those herbs, the stalks of which measure an inch in diameter. The agents must know the country marvelously well, not to be lost in these jungles.

Each day the caravan set out at daybreak, and only halted at midday for an hour. Some packs containing tapioca were then opened, and this food was parsimoniously distributed to the slaves. To this potatoes were added, or goat's meat and veal, when the soldiers had pillaged some village in passing. But the fatigue had been such, the repose so insufficient, so impossible even during these rainy nights, that when the hour for the distribution of food arrived the prisoners could hardly eat. So, eight days after the departure from the Coanza, twenty had fallen by the way, at the mercy of the beasts that prowled behind the convoy. Lions, panthers and leopards waited for the victims which could not fail them, and each evening after sunset their roaring sounded at such a short distance that one might fear a direct attack.

On hearing those roars, rendered more formidable by the darkness, Dick Sand thought with terror of the obstacles such encounters would present against Hercules's enterprise, of the perils that menaced each of his steps. And meanwhile if he himself should find an opportunity to flee, he would not hesitate.

Here are some notes taken by Dick Sand during this journey from the Coanza to Kazounde. Twenty-five "marches" were employed to make this distance of two hundred and fifty miles, the "march" in the traders' language being ten miles, halting by day and night.

From 25th to 27th April.--Saw a village surrounded by walls of reeds, eight or nine feet high. Fields cultivated with maize, beans, "sorghas" and various arachides. Two blacks seized and made prisoners. Fifteen killed. Population fled.

The next day crossed an impetuous river, one hundred and fifty yards wide. Floating bridge, formed of trunks of trees, fastened with lianes. Piles half broken. Two women, tied to the same fork, precipitated into the water. One was carrying her little child. The waters are disturbed and become stained with blood. Crocodiles glide between the parts of the bridge. There is danger of stepping into their open mouths.

April 28th.--Crossed a forest of bauhiniers. Trees of straight timber--those which furnish the iron wood for the Portuguese.

Heavy rain. Earth wet. March extremely painful.

Perceived, toward the center of the convoy, poor Nan, carrying a little negro child in her arms. She drags herself along with difficulty. The slave chained with her limps, and the blood flows from her shoulder, torn by lashes from the whip.

In the evening camped under an enormous baobab with white flowers and a light green foliage.

During the night roars of lions and leopards. Shots fired by one of the natives at a panther. What has become of Hercules?

April 29th and 30th.--First colds of what they call the African winter. Dew very abundant. End of the rainy season with the month of April; it commences with the month of November. Plains still largely inundated. East winds which check perspiration and renders one more liable to take the marsh fevers.

No trace of Mrs. Weldon, nor of Mr. Benedict. Where would they take them, if not to Kazounde? They must have followed the road of the caravan and preceded us. I am eaten up with anxiety. Little Jack must be seized again with the fever in this unhealthy region. But does he still live?

From May 1st to May 6th.--Crossed, with several halting-places, long plains, which evaporation has not been able to dry up. Water everywhere up to the waist. Myriads of leeches adhering to the skin. We must march for all that. On some elevations that emerge are lotus and papyrus. At the bottom, under the water, other plants, with large cabbage leaves, on which the feet slip, which occasions numerous falls.

In these waters, considerable quantities of little fish of the silurus species. The natives catch them by billions in wickers and sell them to the caravans.

Impossible to find a place to camp for the night. We see no limit to the inundated plain. We must march in the dark. To-morrow many slaves will be missing from the convoy. What misery! When one falls, why get up again? A few moments more under these waters, and all would be finished. The overseer's stick would not reach you in the darkness.

Yes, but Mrs. Weldon and her son! I have not the right to abandon them. I shall resist to the end. It is my duty.

Dreadful cries are heard in the night. Twenty soldiers have torn some branches from resinous trees whose branches were above water. Livid lights in the darkness.

This is the cause of the cries I heard. An attack of crocodiles; twelve or fifteen of those monsters have thrown themselves in the darkness on the flank of the caravan.

Women and children have been seized and carried away by the crocodiles to their "pasture lands"--so Livingstone calls those deep holes where this amphibious animal deposits its prey, after having drowned it, for it only eats it when it has reached a certain degree of decomposition.

I have been rudely grazed by the scales of one of these crocodiles. An

adult slave has been seized near me and torn from the fork that held him by the neck. The fork was broken. What a cry of despair! What a howl of grief! I hear it still!

May 7th and 8th.--The next day they count the victims. Twenty slaves have disappeared.

At daybreak I look for Tom and his companions. God be praised! they are living. Alas! ought I to praise God? Is one not happier to be done with all this misery!

Tom is at the head of the convoy. At a moment when his son Bat made a turn, the fork was presented obliquely, and Tom was able to see me.

I search in vain for old Nan. Is she in the central group? or has she perished during that frightful night?

The next day, passed the limit of the inundated plain, after twenty-four hours in the water. We halt on a hill. The sun dries us a little. We eat, but what miserable food! A little tapioca, a few handfuls of maize. Nothing but the troubled water to drink. Prisoners extended on the ground--how many will not get up!

No! it is not possible that Mrs. Weldon and her son have passed through so much misery! God would be so gracious to them as to have them led to Kazounde by another road. The unhappy mother could not resist.

New case of small-pox in the caravan; the "ndoue," as they say. The sick could not be able to go far. Will they abandon them?

May 9th.--They have begun the march again at sunrise. No laggards. The overseer's whip has quickly raised those overcome by fatigue or sickness. Those slaves have a value; they are money. The agents will not leave them behind while they have strength enough to march.

I am surrounded by living skeletons. They have no longer voice enough to complain. I have seen old Nan at last. She is a sad sight. The child she was carrying is no longer in her arms. She is alone, too. That will be less painful for her; but the chain is still around her waist, and she has been obliged to throw the end over her shoulder.

By hastening, I have been able to draw near her. One would say that she did not recognize me. Am I, then, changed to that extent?

"Nan," I said.

The old servant looked at me a long time, and then she exclaimed:

"You, Mr. Dick! I--I--before long I shall be dead!"

"No, no! Courage!" I replied, while my eyes fell so as not to see what was only the unfortunate woman's bloodless specter.

"Dead!" she continued; "and I shall not see my dear mistress again, nor my little Jack. My God! my God! have pity on me!"

I wished to support old Nan, whose whole body trembled under her torn clothing. It would have been a mercy to see myself tied to her, and to carry my part of that chain, whose whole weight she bore since her companion's death.

A strong arm pushes me back, and the unhappy Nan is thrown back into the crowd of slaves, lashed by the whips. I wished to throw myself on that brutal----The Arab chief appears, seizes my arm, and holds me till I find myself again in the caravan's last rank.

Then, in his turn, he pronounces the name, "Negoro!"

Negoro! It is then by the Portuguese's orders that he acts and treats me differently from my companions in misfortune?

For what fate am I reserved?

May 10th.--To-day passed near two villages in flames. The stubble burns on all sides. Dead bodies are hung from the trees the fire has spared. Population fled.

Fields devastated. The razzie is exercised there. Two hundred murders, perhaps, to obtain a dozen slaves.

Evening has arrived. Halt for the night. Camp made under great trees. High shrubs forming a thicket on the border of the forest.

Some prisoners fled the night before, after breaking their forks. They have been retaken, and treated with unprecedented cruelty. The soldiers' and overseers' watchfulness is redoubled.

Night has come. Roaring of lions and hyenas, distant snorting of hippopotami. Doubtless some lake or watercourse near.

In spite of my fatigue, I cannot sleep. I think of so many things.

Then, it seems to me that I hear prowling in the high grass. Some animal, perhaps. Would it dare force an entrance into the camp?

I listen. Nothing! Yes! An animal is passing through the reeds. I am unarmed! I shall defend myself, nevertheless. My life may be useful to Mrs. Weldon, to my companions.

I look through the profound darkness. There is no moon. The night is extremely dark.

Two eyes shine in the darkness, among the papyrus--two eyes of a hyena or a leopard. They disappear--reappear.

At last there is a rustling of the bushes. An animal springs upon me!

I am going to cry out, to give the alarm. Fortunately, I was able to restrain myself. I cannot believe my eyes! It is Dingo! Dingo, who is near me! Brave Dingo! How is it restored to me? How has it been able to find me again? Ah! instinct! Would instinct be sufficient to explain such miracles of fidelity? It licks my hands. Ah! good dog, now my only friend, they have not killed you, then!

It understands me.

I return its caresses.

It wants to bark.

I calm it. It must not be heard.

Let it follow the caravan in this way, without being seen, and perhaps----But what! It rubs its neck obstinately against my hands. It seems to say to me: "Look for something." I look, and I feel something there, fastened to its neck. A piece of reed is slipped under the collar, on which are graven those two letters, S.V., the mystery of which is still inexplicable to us.

Yes. I have unfastened the reed. I have broken it! There is a letter inside. But this letter--I cannot read it. I must wait for daylight!--daylight! I should like to keep Dingo; but the good animal, even while licking my hands, seems in a hurry to leave me. It understands that its mission is finished. With one bound aside, it

disappears among the bushes without noise. May God spare it from the lions' and hyenas' teeth!

Dingo has certainly returned to him who sent it to me.

This letter, that I cannot yet read, burns my hands! Who has written it? Would it come from Mrs. Weldon? Does it come from Hercules? How has the faithful animal, that we believed dead, met either the one or the other? What is this letter going to tell me? Is it a plan of escape that it brings me? Or does it only give me news of those dear to me? Whatever it may be, this incident has greatly moved me, and has relaxed my misery.

Ah! the day comes so slowly. I watch for the least light on the horizon. I cannot close my eyes. I still hear the roaring of the animals. My poor Dingo, can you escape them? At last day is going to appear, and almost without dawn, under these tropical latitudes.

I settle myself so as not to be seen. I try to read--I cannot yet. At last I have read. The letter is from Hercules's hand. It is written on a bit of paper, in pencil. Here is what it says:

"Mrs. Weldon was taken away with little Jack in a kitanda. Harris and Negoro accompany it. They precede the caravan by three or four marches, with Cousin Benedict. I have not been able to communicate with her. I have found Dingo, who must have been wounded by a shot, but cured. Good hope, Mr. Dick. I only think of

you all, and I fled to be more useful to you. HERCULES."

Ah! Mrs. Weldon and her son are living. God be praised! They have not to suffer the fatigues of these rude halting-places. A kitanda--it is a kind of litter of dry grass, suspended to a long bamboo, that two men carry on the shoulder. A stuff curtain covers it over. Mrs. Weldon and her little Jack are in that kitanda. What does Harris and Negoro want to do with them? Those wretches are evidently going to Kazounde. Yes, yes, I shall find them again. Ah! in all this misery it is good news, it is joy that Dingo has brought me!

From May 11th to 15th.--The caravan continues its march. The prisoners drag themselves along more and more painfully. The majority have marks of blood under their feet. I calculate that it will take ten days more to reach Kazounde. How many will have ceased to suffer before then? But I--I must arrive there, I shall arrive there.

It is atrocious! There are, in the convoy, unfortunate ones whose bodies are only wounds. The cords that bind them enter into the flesh.

Since yesterday a mother carries in her arms her little infant, dead from hunger. She will not separate from it.

Our route is strewn with dead bodies. The smallpox rages with new violence.

We have just passed near a tree. To this tree slaves were attached by

the neck. They were left there to die of hunger.

From May 16th to 24th.--I am almost exhausted, but I have no right to give up. The rains have entirely ceased. We have days of "hard marching." That is what the traders call the "tirikesa," or afternoon march. We must go faster, and the ground rises in rather steep ascents.

We pass through high shrubs of a very tough kind. They are the "nyassi," the branches of which tear the skin off my face, whose sharp seeds penetrate to my skin, under my dilapidated clothes. My strong boots have fortunately kept good.

The agents have commenced to abandon the slaves too sick to keep up. Besides, food threatens to fail; soldiers and pagazis would revolt if their rations were diminished. They dare not retrench from them, and then so much worse for the captives.

"Let them eat one another!" said the chief.

Then it follows that young slaves, still strong, die without the appearance of sickness. I remember what Dr. Livingstone has said on that subject: "Those unfortunates complain of the heart; they put their hands there, and they fall. It is positively the heart that breaks! That is peculiar to free men, reduced to slavery unexpectedly!"

To-day, twenty captives who could no longer drag themselves along, have been massacred with axes, by the havildars! The Arab chief is not opposed to massacre. The scene has been frightful!

Poor old Nan has fallen under the knife, in this horrible butchery! I strike against her corpse in passing! I cannot even give her a Christian burial! She is first of the "Pilgrim's" survivors whom God has called back to him. Poor good creature! Poor Nan!

I watch for Dingo every night. It returns no more! Has misfortune overtaken it or Hercules? No! no! I do not want to believe it! This silence, which appears so long to me, only proves one thing--it is that Hercules has nothing new to tell me yet. Besides, he must be prudent, and on his guard.

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CHAPTER IX.

KAZOUNDE.

ON May 26th, the caravan of slaves arrived at Kazounde. Fifty per cent. of the prisoners taken in the last raid had fallen on the road. Meanwhile, the business was still good for the traders; demands were coming in, and the price of slaves was about to rise in the African markets.

Angola at this period did an immense trade in blacks. The Portuguese authorities of St. Paul de Loanda, or of Benguela, could not stop it without difficulty, for the convoys traveled towards the interior of the African continent. The pens near the coast overflowed with prisoners, the few slavers that succeeded in eluding the cruisers along the shore not being sufficient to carry all of them to the Spanish colonies of America.

Kazounde, situated three hundred miles from the mouth of the Coanza, is one of the principal "lakonis," one of the most important markets of the province. On its grand square the "tchitoka" business is transacted; there, the slaves are exposed and sold. It is from this point that the caravans radiate toward the region of the great lakes.

Kazounde, like all the large towns of Central Africa, is divided into two distinct parts. One is the quarter of the Arab, Portuguese or

native traders, and it contains their pens; the other is the residence of the negro king, some ferocious crowned drunkard, who reigns through terror, and lives from supplies furnished by the contractors.

At Kazounde, the commercial quarter then belonged to that Jose-Antonio Alvez, of whom Harris and Negoro had spoken, they being simply agents in his pay. This contractor's principal establishment was there, he had a second at Bihe, and a third at Cassange, in Benguela, which Lieutenant Cameron visited some years later.

Imagine a large central street, on each side groups of houses, "tembes," with flat roofs, walls of baked earth, and a square court which served as an enclosure for cattle. At the end of the street was the vast "tchitoka" surrounded by slave-pens. Above this collection of buildings rose some enormous banyans, whose branches swayed with graceful movements. Here and there great palms, with their heads in the air, drove the dust on the streets like brooms. Twenty birds of prey watched over the public health. Such is the business quarter of Kazounde.

Near by ran the Louhi, a river whose course, still undetermined, is an affluent, or at least a sub-affluent, of the Coango, a tributary of the Zoire.

The residence of the King of Kazounde, which borders on the business quarter, is a confused collection of ill-built hovels, which spread over the space of a mile square. Of these hovels, some are open,

others are inclosed by a palisade of reeds, or bordered with a hedge of fig-trees. In one particular enclosure, surrounded by a fence of papyrus, thirty of these huts served us dwellings for the chief's slaves, in another group lived his wives, and a "tembe," still larger and higher, was half hidden in a plantation of cassada. Such was the residence of the King of Kazounde, a man of fifty--named Moini Loungga; and already almost deprived of the power of his predecessors. He had not four thousand of soldiers there, where the principal Portuguese traders could count twenty thousand, and he could no longer, as in former times, decree the sacrifice of twenty-five or thirty slaves a day.

This king was, besides, a prematurely-aged man, exhausted by debauch, crazed by strong drink, a ferocious maniac, mutilating his subjects, his officers or his ministers, as the whim seized him, cutting the nose and ears off some, and the foot or the hand from others. His own death, not unlooked for, would be received without regret.

A single man in all Kazounde might, perhaps, lose by the death of Moini Loungga. This was the contractor, Jose-Antonio Alvez, who agreed very well with the drunkard, whose authority was recognized by the whole province. If the accession of his first wife, Queen Moini, should be contested, the States of Moini Loungga might be invaded by a neighboring competitor, one of the kings of Oukonson. The latter, being younger and more active, had already seized some villages belonging to the Kazounde government. He had in his services another trader, a rival of Alvez Tipo-Tipo, a black Arab of a pure race, whom

Cameron met at N'yangwe.

What was this Alvez, the real sovereign under the reign of an imbruted negro, whose vices he had developed and served?

Jose-Antonio Alvez, already advanced in years, was not, as one might suppose, a "msoungou," that is to say, a man of the white race. There was nothing Portuguese about him but his name, borrowed, no doubt, for the needs of commerce. He was a real negro, well known among traders, and called Kenndele. He was born, in fact, at Donndo, or the borders of the Coanza. He had commenced by being simply the agent of the slave-brokers, and would have finished as a famous trader, that is to say, in the skin of an old knave, who called himself the most honest man in the world.

Cameron met this Alvez in the latter part of 1874, at Kilemmba, the capital of Kassonngo, chief of Ouroua. He guided Cameron with his caravan to his own establishment at Bihe, over a route of seven hundred miles. The convoy of slaves, on arriving at Kazounde, had been conducted to the large square.

It was the 26th of May. Dick Sand's calculations were then verified. The journey had lasted thirty-eight days from the departure of the army encamped on the banks of the Coanza. Five weeks of the most fearful miseries that human beings could support.

It was noon when the train entered Kazounde. The drums were beaten,

horns were blown in the midst of the detonations of fire-arms. The soldiers guarding the caravan discharged their guns in the air, and the men employed by Jose-Antonio Alvez replied with interest. All these bandits were happy at meeting again, after an absence which had lasted for four months. They were now going to rest and make up for lost time in excesses and idleness.

The prisoners then formed a total of two hundred and fifty, the majority being completely exhausted. After having been driven like cattle, they were to be shut up in pens, which American farmers would not have used for pigs. Twelve or fifteen hundred other captives awaited them, all of whom would be exposed in the market at Kazounde on the next day but one. These pens were filled up with the slaves from the caravan. The heavy forks had been taken off them, but they were still in chains.

The "pagazis" had stopped on the square after having disposed of their loads of ivory, which the Kazounde dealers would deliver. Then, being paid with a few yards of calico or other stuff at the highest price, they would return and join some other caravan.

Old Tom and his companions had been freed from the iron collar which they had carried for five weeks. Bat and his father embraced each other, and all shook hands; but no one ventured to speak. What could they say that would not be an expression of despair. Bat, Acteon and Austin, all three vigorous, accustomed to hard work, had been able to resist fatigue; but old Tom, weakened by privations, was nearly

exhausted. A few more days and his corpse would have been left, like poor Nan's, as food for the beasts of the province.

As soon as they arrived, the four men had been placed in a narrow pen, and the door had been at once shut upon them. There they had found some food, and they awaited the trader's visit, with whom, although quite in vain, they intended to urge the fact that they were Americans.

Dick Sand had remained alone on the square, under the special care of a keeper.

At length he was at Kazounde, where he did not doubt that Mrs. Weldon, little Jack, and Cousin Benedict had preceded him. He had looked for them in crossing the various quarters of the town, even in the depths of the "tembes" that lined the streets, on this "tchitoka" now almost deserted.

Mrs. Weldon was not there.

"Have they not brought her here?" he asked himself. "But where could she be? No; Hercules cannot be mistaken. Then, again, he must have learned the secret designs of Negoro and Harris; yet they, too--I do not see them."

Dick Sand felt the most painful anxiety. He could understand that Mrs. Weldon, retained a prisoner, would be concealed from him. But Harris

and Negoro, particularly the latter, should hasten to see him, now in their power, if only to enjoy their triumph--to insult him, torture him, perhaps avenge themselves. From the fact that they were not there, must he conclude that they had taken another direction, and that Mrs. Weldon was to be conducted to some other point of Central Africa? Should the presence of the American and the Portuguese be the signal for his punishment, Dick Sand impatiently desired it. Harris and Negoro at Kazounde, was for him the certainty that Mrs. Weldon and her child were also there.

Dick Sand then told himself that, since the night when Dingo had brought him Hercules's note, the dog had not been seen. The young man had prepared an answer at great risks. In it he told Hercules to think only of Mrs. Weldon, not to lose sight of her, and to keep her informed as well as possible of what happened; but he had not been able to send it to its destination. If Dingo had been able to penetrate the ranks of the caravan once, why did not Hercules let him try it a second time? Had the faithful animal perished in some fruitless attempt? Perhaps Hercules was following Mrs. Weldon, as Dick Sand would have done in his place. Followed by Dingo, he might have plunged into the depths of the woody plateau of Africa, in the hope of reaching one of the interior establishments.

What could Dick Sand imagine if, in fact, neither Mrs. Weldon nor her enemies were there? He had been so sure, perhaps foolishly, of finding them at Kazounde, that not to see them there at once gave him a terrible shock. He felt a sensation of despair that he could not

subdue. His life, if it were no longer useful to those whom he loved, was good for nothing, and he had only to die. But, in thinking in that manner, Dick Sand mistook his own character. Under the pressure of these trials, the child became a man, and with him discouragement could only be an accidental tribute paid to human nature.

A loud concert of trumpet-calls and cries suddenly commenced. Dick Sand, who had just sunk down in the dust of the "tchitoka," stood up. Every new incident might put him on the track of those whom he sought.

In despair a moment before, he now no longer despaired.

"Alvez! Alvez!" This name was repeated by a crowd of natives and soldiers who now invaded the grand square. The man on whom the fate of so many unfortunate people depended was about to appear. It was possible that his agents, Harris and Negoro, were with him. Dick Sand stood upright, his eyes open, his nostrils dilated. The two traitors would find this lad of fifteen years before them, upright, firm, looking them in the face. It would not be the captain of the "Pilgrim" who would tremble before the old ship's cook.

A hammock, a kind of "kitanda" covered by an old patched curtain, discolored, fringed with rags, appeared at the end of the principal street. An old negro descended. It was the trader, Jose-Antonio Alvez. Several attendants accompanied him, making strong demonstrations.

Along with Alvez appeared his friend Coimbra, the son of Major Coimbra

of Bihe, and, according to Lieutenant Cameron, the greatest scamp in the province. He was a dirty creature, his breast was uncovered, his eyes were bloodshot, his hair was rough and curly, his face yellow; he was dressed in a ragged shirt and a straw petticoat. He would have been called a horrible old man in his tattered straw hat. This Coimbra was the confidant, the tool of Alvez, an organizer of raids, worthy of commanding the trader's bandits.

As for the trader, he might have looked a little less sordid than his attendant. He wore the dress of an old Turk the day after a carnival. He did not furnish a very high specimen of the factory chiefs who carry on the trade on a large scale.

To Dick Sand's great disappointment, neither Harris nor Negoro appeared in the crowd that followed Alvez. Must he, then, renounce all hope of finding them at Kazounde?

Meanwhile, the chief of the caravan, the Arab, Ibn Hamis, shook hands with Alvez and Coimbra. He received numerous congratulations. Alvez made a grimace at the fifty per cent. of slaves failing in the general count, but, on the whole, the affair was very satisfactory. With what the trader possessed of human merchandise in his pens, he could satisfy the demands from the interior, and barter slaves for ivory teeth and those "hannas" of copper, a kind of St. Andrew's cross, in which form this metal is carried into the center of Africa.

The overseers were also complimented. As for the porters, the trader

gave orders that their salary should be immediately paid them.

Jose-Antonio Alvez and Coimbra spoke a kind of Portuguese mingled with a native idiom, which a native of Lisbon would scarcely have understood. Dick Sand could not hear what these merchants were saying. Were they talking of him and his companions, so treacherously joined to the persons in the convoy? The young man could not doubt it, when, at a gesture from the Arab, Ibn Hamis, an overseer, went toward the pen where Tom, Austin, Bat and Acteon had been shut up.

Almost immediately the four Americans were led before Alvez.

Dick Sand slowly approached. He wished to lose nothing of this scene.

Alvez's face lit up at the sight of these few well-made blacks, to whom rest and more abundant food had promptly restored their natural vigor. He looked with contempt at old Tom, whose age would affect his value, but the other three would sell high at the next Kazounde sale.

Alvez remembered a few English words which some agents, like the American, Harris, had taught him, and the old monkey thought he would ironically welcome his new slaves.

Tom understood the trader's words; he at once advanced, and, showing his companions, said:

"We are free men--citizens of the United States."

Alvez certainly understood him; he replied with a good-humored grimace, wagging his head:

"Yes, yes, Americans! Welcome, welcome!"

"Welcome," added Coimbra.

He advanced toward Austin, and like a merchant who examines a sample, after having felt his chest and his shoulders, he wanted to make him open his mouth, so as to see his teeth.

But at this moment Signor Coimbra received in his face the worst blow that a major's son had ever caught.

Alvez's confidant staggered under it.

Several soldiers threw themselves on Austin, who would perhaps pay dearly for this angry action.

Alvez stopped them by a look. He laughed, indeed, at the misfortune of his friend, Coimbra, who had lost two of the five or six teeth remaining to him.

Alvez did not intend to have his merchandise injured. Then, he was of a gay disposition, and it was a long time since he had laughed so much.

Meanwhile, he consoled the much discomfited Coimbra, and the latter, helped to his feet, again took his place near the trader, while throwing a menacing look at the audacious Austin.

At this moment Dick Sand, driven forward by an overseer, was led before Alvez.

The latter evidently knew all about the young man, whence he came, and how he had been taken to the camp on the Coanza.

So he said, after having given him an evil glance:

"The little Yankee!"

"Yes, Yankee!" replied Dick Sand. "What do they wish to do with my companions and me?"

"Yankee! Yankee! Yankee!" repeated Alvez.

Did he not or would he not understand the question put to him?

A second time Dick Sand asked the question regarding his companions and himself. He then turned to Coimbra, whose features, degraded as they were by the abuse of alcoholic liquors, he saw were not of native origin.

Coimbra repeated the menacing gesture already made at Austin, and did not answer.

During this time Alvez talked rapidly with the Arab, Ibn Hamis, and evidently of things that concerned Dick Sand and his friends.

No doubt they were to be again separated, and who could tell if another chance to exchange a few words would ever again be offered them.

"My friends," said Dick, in a low voice, and as if he were only speaking to himself, "just a few words! I have received, by Dingo, a letter from Hercules. He has followed the caravan. Harris and Negoro took away Mrs. Weldon, Jack, and Mr. Benedict. Where? I know not, if they are not here at Kazounde. Patience! courage! Be ready at any moment. God may yet have pity on us!"

"And Nan?" quickly asked old Tom.

"Nan is dead!"

"The first!"

"And the last!" replied Dick Sand, "for we know well----"

At this moment a hand was laid on his shoulder, and he heard these words, spoken in the amiable voice which he knew only too well:

"Ah, my young friend, if I am not mistaken! Enchanted to see you again!"

Dick Sand turned.

Harris was before him.

"Where is Mrs. Weldon?" cried Dick Sand, walking toward the American.

"Alas!" replied Harris, pretending a pity that he did not feel, "the poor mother! How could she survive!"

"Dead!" cried Dick Sand. "And her child?"

"The poor baby!" replied Harris, in the same tone, "how could he outlive such fatigue!"

So, all whom Dick Sand loved were dead!

What passed within him? An irresistible movement of anger, a desire for vengeance, which he must satisfy at any price!

Dick Sand jumped upon Harris, seized a dagger from the American's belt, and plunged it into his heart.

"Curse you!" cried Harris, falling.

Harris was dead.

CHAPTER X.

THE GREAT MARKET DAY.

Dick Sand's action had been so rapid that no one could stop him. A few natives threw themselves upon him, and he would have been murdered had not Negoro appeared.

At a sign from the Portuguese, the natives drew back, raised Harris's corpse and carried it away. Alvez and Coimbra demanded Dick Sand's immediate death, but Negoro said to them in a low voice that they would lose nothing by waiting. The order was given to take away the young novice, with a caution not to lose sight of him for a moment.

Dick Sand had seen Negoro for the first time since their departure from the coast. He knew that this wretch was alone responsible for the loss of the "Pilgrim." He ought to hate him still more than his accomplices. And yet, after having struck the American, he scorned to address a word to Negoro. Harris had said that Mrs. Weldon and her child had succumbed. Nothing interested him now, not even what they would do with him. They would send him away. Where? It did not matter.

Dick Sand, heavily chained, was left on the floor of a pen without a window, a kind of dungeon where the trader, Alvez, shut up the slaves condemned to death for rebellion or unlawful acts. There he could no longer have any communication with the exterior; he no longer dreamed

of regretting it. He had avenged those whom he loved, who no longer lived. Whatever fate awaited him, he was ready for it.

It will be understood that if Negoro had stopped the natives who were about to punish Harris's murderer, it was only because he wished to reserve Dick Sand for one of those terrible torments of which the natives hold the secret. The ship's cook held in his power the captain of fifteen years. He only wanted Hercules to make his vengeance complete.

Two days afterward, May 28th, the sale began, the great "lakoni," during which the traders of the principal factories of the interior would meet the natives of the neighboring provinces. This market was not specially for the sale of slaves, but all the products of this fertile Africa would be gathered there with the producers.

From early morning all was intense animation on the vast "tchitoka" of Kazounde, and it is difficult to give a proper idea of the scene. It was a concourse of four or five thousand persons, including Alvez's slaves, among whom were Tom and his companions. These four men, for the reason that they belonged to a different race, are all the more valuable to the brokers in human flesh. Alvez was there, the first among all. Attended by Coimbra, he offered the slaves in lots. These the traders from the interior would form into caravans. Among these traders were certain half-breeds from Oujiji, the principal market of Lake Tanganyika, and some Arabs, who are far superior to the half-breeds in this kind of trade.

The natives flocked there in great numbers. There were children, men, and women, the latter being animated traders, who, as regards a genius for bargaining, could only be compared to their white sisters.

In the markets of large cities, even on a great day of sale, there is never much noise or confusion. Among the civilized the need of selling exceeds the desire to buy. Among these African savages offers are made with as much eagerness as demands.

The "lakoni" is a festival day for the natives of both sexes, and if for good reasons they do not put on their best clothes, they at least wear their handsomest ornaments.

Some wear the hair divided in four parts, covered with cushions, and in plaits tied like a chignon or arranged in pan-handles on the front of the head with bunches of red feathers. Others have the hair in bent horns sticky with red earth and oil, like the red lead used to close the joints of machines. In these masses of real or false hair is worn a bristling assemblage of skewers, iron and ivory pins, often even, among elegant people, a tattooing-knife is stuck in the crisp mass, each hair of which is put through a "sofi" or glass bead, thus forming a tapestry of different-colored grains. Such are the edifices most generally seen on the heads of the men.

The women prefer to divide their hair in little tufts of the size of a cherry, in wreaths, in twists the ends of which form designs in

relief, and in corkscrews, worn the length of the face. A few, more simple and perhaps prettier, let their long hair hang down the back, in the English style, and others wear it cut over the forehead in a fringe, like the French. Generally they wear on these wigs a greasy putty, made of red clay or of glossy "ukola," a red substance extracted from sandal-wood, so that these elegant persons look as if their heads were dressed with tiles.

It must not be supposed that this luxury of ornamentation is confined to the hair of the natives. What are ears for if not to pass pins of precious wood through, also copper rings, charms of plaited maize, which draw them forward, or little gourds which do for snuff-boxes, and to such an extent that the distended lobes of these appendages fall sometimes to the shoulders of their owners?

After all, the African savages have no pockets, and how could they have any? This gives rise to the necessity of placing where they can their knives, pipes, and other customary objects. As for the neck, arms, wrists, legs, and ankles, these various parts of the body are undoubtedly destined to carry the copper and brass bracelets, the horns cut off and decorated with bright buttons, the rows of red pearls, called same-sames or "talakas," and which were very fashionable. Besides, with these jewels, worn in profusion, the wealthy people of the place looked like traveling shrines.

Again, if nature gave the natives teeth, was it not that they could pull out the upper and lower incisors, file them in points, and curve

them in sharp fangs like the fangs of a rattlesnake? If she has placed nails at the end of the fingers, is it not that they may grow so immoderately that the use of the hand is rendered almost impossible? If the skin, black or brown, covers the human frame, is it not so as to zebra it by "temmbos" or tattooings representing trees, birds, crescents, full moons, or waving lines, in which Livingstone thought he could trace the designs of ancient Egypt? This tattooing, done by fathers, is practised by means of a blue matter introduced into the incisions, and is "stereotyped" point by point on the bodies of the children, thus establishing to what tribe or to what family they belong. The coat-of-arms must be engraved on the breast, when it cannot be painted on the panel of a carriage.

Such are the native fashions in ornament. In regard to garments properly so called, they are summed up very easily; for the men, an apron of antelope leather, reaching to the knees, or perhaps a petticoat of a straw material of brilliant colors; for the women, a belt of pearls, supporting at the hips a green petticoat, embroidered in silk, ornamented with glass beads or coury; sometimes they wear garments made of "lambba," a straw material, blue, black, and yellow, which is much prized by the natives of Zanzibar.

These, of course, are the negroes of the best families. The others, merchants, and slaves, are seldom clothed. The women generally act as porters, and reach the market with enormous baskets on their back, which they hold by means of a leathern strap passed over the forehead. Then, their places being taken, and the merchandise unpacked, they

squat in their empty baskets.

The astonishing fertility of the country causes the choice alimentary produces to be brought to this "lakoni." There were quantities of the rice which returns a hundred per cent., of the maize, which, in three crops in eight months, produces two hundred per cent., the sesamum, the pepper of Ouroua, stronger than the Cayenne, allspice, tapioca, sorghum, nutmegs, salt, and palm-oil.

Hundreds of goats were gathered there, hogs, sheep without wool, evidently of Tartar origin, quantities of poultry and fish. Specimens of pottery, very gracefully turned, attracted the eyes by their violent colors.

Various drinks, which the little natives cried about in a squeaking voice, enticed the unwary, in the form of plantain wine, "pombe," a liquor in great demand, "malofou," sweet beer, made from the fruit of the banana-tree and mead, a limpid mixture of honey and water fermented with malt.

But what made the Kazounde market still more curious was the commerce in stuffs and ivory.

In the line of stuffs, one might count by thousands of "choukkas" or armfuls, the "Mericani" unbleached calico, come from Salem, in Massachusetts, the "kanaki," a blue gingham, thirty-four inches wide, the "sohari," a stuff in blue and white squares, with a red border,

mixed with small blue stripes. It is cheaper than the "dioulis," a silk from Surat, with a green, red or yellow ground, which is worth from seventy to eighty dollars for a remnant of three yards when woven with gold.

As for ivory, it was brought from all parts of Central Africa, being destined for Khartoum, Zanzibar, or Natal. A large number of merchants are employed solely in this branch of African commerce.

Imagine how many elephants are killed to furnish the five hundred thousand kilograms of ivory, which are annually exported to European markets, and principally to the English! The western coast of Africa alone produces one hundred and forty tons of this precious substance. The average weight is twenty-eight pounds for a pair of elephant's tusks, which, in 1874, were valued as high as fifteen hundred francs; but there are some that weigh one hundred and seventy-five pounds, and at the Kazounde market, admirers would have found some admirable ones. They were of an opaque ivory, translucid, soft under the tool, and with a brown rind, preserving its whiteness and not growing yellow with time like the ivories of other provinces.

And, now, how are these various business affairs regulated between buyers and sellers? What is the current coin? As we have said, for the African traders this money is the slave.

The native pays in glass beads of Venetian manufacture, called "catchocolos," when they are of a lime white; "bouboulous," when

they are black; "sikounderetches," when they are red. These beads or pearls, strung in ten rows or "khetes," going twice around the neck, make the "foundo," which is of great value. The usual measure of the beads is the "frasilah," which weighs seventy pounds. Livingstone, Cameron, and Stanley were always careful to be abundantly provided with this money.

In default of glass beads, the "pice," a Zanzibar piece, worth four centimes, and the "vroungouas," shells peculiar to the eastern coasts, are current in the markets of the African continent. As for the cannibal tribes, they attach a certain value to the teeth of the human jaw, and at the "lakoni," these chaplets were to be seen on the necks of natives, who had no doubt eaten their producers; but these teeth were ceasing to be used as money.

Such, then, was the appearance of the great market. Toward the middle of the day the gaiety reached a climax; the noise became deafening. The fury of the neglected venders, and the anger of the overcharged customers, were beyond description. Thence frequent quarrels, and, as we know, few guardians of the peace to quell the fray in this howling crowd.

Toward the middle of the day, Alvez gave orders to bring the slaves, whom he wished to sell, to the square. The crowd was thus increased by two thousand unfortunate beings of all ages, whom the trader had kept in pens for several months. This "stock" was not in a bad condition. Long rest and sufficient food had improved these slaves so as to look

to advantage at the "lakoni." As for the last arrivals, they could not stand any comparison with them, and, after a month in the pens, Alvez could certainly have sold them with more profit. The demands, however, from the eastern coast, were so great that he decided to expose and sell them as they were.

This was a misfortune for Tom and his three companions. The drivers pushed them into the crowd that invaded the "tchitoka." They were strongly chained, and their glances told what horror, what fury and shame overwhelmed them.

"Mr. Dick is not there," Bat said, after some time, during which he had searched the vast plain with his eyes.

"No," replied Acteon, "they will not put him up for sale."

"He will be killed, if he is not already," added the old black. "As for us, we have but one hope left, which is, that the same trader will buy us all. It would be a great consolation not to be separated."

"Ah! to know that you are far away from me, working like a slave, my poor, old father!" cried Bat, sobbing aloud.

"No," said Tom. "No; they will not separate us, and perhaps we might----"

"If Hercules were here!" cried Austin.

But the giant had not reappeared. Since the news sent to Dick Sand, they had heard no one mention either Hercules or Dingo. Should they envy him his fate? Why, yes; for if Hercules were dead, he was saved from the chains of slavery!

Meanwhile, the sale had commenced. Alvez's agents marched the various lots of men, women and children through the crowd, without caring if they separated mothers from their infants. May we not call these beings "unfortunates," who were treated only as domestic animals?

Tom and his companions were thus led from buyers to buyers. An agent walked before them naming the price adjudged to their lot. Arab or mongrel brokers, from the central provinces, came to examine them. They did not discover in them the traits peculiar to the African race, these traits being modified in America after the second generation. But these vigorous and intelligent negroes, so very different from the blacks brought from the banks of the Zambeze or the Loualaba, were all the more valuable. They felt them, turned them, and looked at their teeth. Horse-dealers thus examine the animals they wish to buy. Then they threw a stick to a distance, made them run and pick it up, and thus observed their gait.

This was the method employed for all, and all were submitted to these humiliating trials. Do not believe that these people are completely indifferent to this treatment! No, excepting the children, who cannot comprehend the state of degradation to which they are reduced, all,

men or women, were ashamed.

Besides, they were not spared injuries and blows. Coimbra, half drunk, and Alvez's agents, treated them with extreme brutality, and from their new masters, who had just paid for them in ivory stuffs and beads, they would receive no better treatment. Violently separated, a mother from her child, a husband from his wife, a brother from a sister, they were not allowed a last caress nor a last kiss, and on the "lakoni" they saw each other for the last time.

In fact, the demands of the trade exacted that the slaves should be sent in different directions, according to their sex. The traders who buy the men do not buy women. The latter, in virtue of polygamy, which is legal among the Mussulmans, are sent to the Arabic countries, where they are exchanged for ivory. The men, being destined to the hardest labor, go to the factories of the two coasts, and are exported either to the Spanish colonies or to the markets of Muscat and Madagascar. This sorting leads to heart-breaking scenes between those whom the agents separate, and who will die without ever seeing each other again.

The four companions in turn submitted to the common fate. But, to tell the truth, they did not fear this event. It was better for them to be exported into a slave colony. There, at least, they might have a chance to protest. On the contrary, if sent to the interior, they might renounce all hope of ever regaining their liberty.

It happened as they wished. They even had the almost unhoped for consolation of not being separated. They were in brisk demand, being wanted by several traders. Alvez clapped his hands. The prices rose.
It was strange to see these slaves of unknown value in the Kazounde market, and Alvez had taken good care to conceal where they came from. Tom and his friends, not speaking the language of the country, could not protest.

Their master was a rich Arab trader, who in a few days would send them to Lake Tanganyika, the great thoroughfare for slaves; then, from that point, toward the factories of Zanzibar.

Would they ever reach there, through the most unhealthy and the most dangerous countries of Central Africa? Fifteen hundred miles to march under these conditions, in the midst of frequent wars, raised and carried on between chiefs, in a murderous climate. Was old Tom strong enough to support such misery? Would he not fall on the road like old Nan? But the poor men were not separated. The chain that held them all was lighter to carry. The Arab trader would evidently take care of merchandise which promised him a large profit in the Zanzibar market.

Tom, Bat, Acteon, and Austin then left the place. They saw and heard nothing of the scene which was to end the great "lakoni" of Kazounde.

CHAPTER XI

THE KING OF KAZOUNDE IS OFFERED A PUNCH.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon when a loud noise of drums, cymbals, and other instruments of African origin resounded at the end of the principal street. In all corners of the market-place the animation was redoubled. Half a day of cries and wrestling had neither weakened the voices nor broken the limbs of these abominable traders. A large number of slaves still remained to be sold. The traders disputed over the lots with an ardor of which the London Exchange would give but an imperfect idea, even on a day when stocks were rising.

All business was stopped, and the criers took their breath as soon as the discordant concert commenced.

The King of Kazounde, Moini Loungga, had come to honor the great "lakoni" with a visit. A numerous train of women, officers, soldiers and slaves followed him. Alvez and some other traders went to meet him, and naturally exaggerated the attention which this crowned brute particularly enjoyed.

Moini Loungga was carried in an old palanquin, and descended, not without the aid of a dozen arms, in the center of the large square.

This king was fifty years old, but he looked eighty. Imagine a frightful monkey who had reached extreme old age; on his head a sort of crown, ornamented with leopard's claws, dyed red, and enlarged by tufts of whitish hair; this was the crown of the sovereigns of Kazounde. From his waist hung two petticoats made of leather, embroidered with pearls, and harder than a blacksmith's apron. He had on his breast a quantity of tattooing which bore witness to the ancient nobility of the king; and, to believe him, the genealogy of Moini Loungga was lost in the night of time. On the ankles, wrists and arms of his majesty, bracelets of leather were rolled, and he wore a pair of domestic shoes with yellow tops, which Alvez had presented him with about twenty years before.

His majesty carried in his left hand a large stick with a plated knob, and in his right a small broom to drive away flies, the handle of which was enriched with pearls.

Over his head was carried one of those old patched umbrellas, which seemed to have been cut out of a harlequin's dress.

On the monarch's neck and on his nose were the magnifying glass and the spectacles which had caused Cousin Benedict so much trouble. They had been hidden in Bat's pocket.

Such is the portrait of his negro majesty, who made the country tremble in a circumference of a hundred miles.

Moini Loungga, from the fact of occupying a throne, pretended to be of celestial origin, and had any of his subjects doubted the fact, he would have sent them into another world to discover it. He said that, being of a divine essence, he was not subject to terrestrial laws. If he ate, it was because he wished to do so; if he drank, it was because it gave him pleasure. It was impossible for him to drink any more. His ministers and his officers, all incurable drunkards, would have passed before him for sober men.

The court was alcoholized to the last chief, and incessantly imbibed strong beer, cider, and, above all, a certain drink which Alvez furnished in profusion.

Moini Loungga counted in his harem wives of all ages and of all kinds. The larger part of them accompanied him in this visit to the "lakoni."

Moini, the first, according to date, was a vixen of forty years, of royal blood, like her colleagues. She wore a bright tartan, a straw petticoat embroidered with pearls, and necklaces wherever she could put them. Her hair was dressed so as to make an enormous framework on her little head. She was, in fact, a monster.

The other wives, who were either the cousins or the sisters of the king, were less richly dressed, but much younger. They walked behind her, ready to fulfil, at a sign from their master, their duties as human furniture. These unfortunate beings were really nothing else. If the king wished to sit down, two of these women bent toward the earth

and served him for a chair, while his feet rested on the bodies of some others, as if on an ebony carpet.

In Moini Loungga's suite came his officers, his captains, and his magicians.

A remarkable thing about these savages, who staggered like their master, was that each lacked a part of his body--one an ear, another an eye, this one the nose, that one the hand. Not one was whole. That is because they apply only two kinds of punishment in Kazounde--mutilation or death--all at the caprice of the king. For the least fault, some amputation, and the most cruelly punished are those whose ears are cut off, because they can no longer wear rings in their ears.

The captains of the kilolos, governors of districts, hereditary or named for four years, wore hats of zebra skin and red vests for their whole uniform. Their hands brandished long palm canes, steeped at one end with charmed drugs.

As to the soldiers, they had for offensive and defensive weapons, bows, of which the wood, twined with the cord, was ornamented with fringes; knives, whetted with a serpent's tongue; broad and long lances; shields of palm wood, decorated in arabesque style. For what there was of uniform, properly so called, it cost his majesty's treasury absolutely nothing.

Finally, the kind's cortege comprised, in the last place, the court magicians and the instrumentalists.

The sorcerers, the "mganngas," are the doctors of the country. These savages attach an absolute faith to divinatory services, to incantations, to the fetiches, clay figures stained with white and red, representing fantastic animals or figures of men and women cut out of whole wood. For the rest, those magicians were not less mutilated than the other courtiers, and doubtless the monarch paid them in this way for the cures that did not succeed.

The instrumentalists, men or women, made sharp rattles whizz, noisy drums sound or shudder under small sticks terminated by a caoutchouc ball, "marimehas," kinds of dulcimers formed of two rows of gourds of various dimensions--the whole very deafening for any one who does not possess a pair of African ears.

Above this crowd, which composed the royal cortege, waved some flags and standards, then at the ends of spears the bleached skulls of the rival chiefs whom Moini Loungga had vanquished.

When the king had quitted his palanquin, acclamations burst forth from all sides. The soldiers of the caravan discharged their old guns, the low detonations of which were but little louder than the vociferations of the crowd. The overseers, after rubbing their black noses with cinnabar powder, which they carried in a sack, bowed to the ground. Then Alvez, advancing in his turn, handed the king a supply of fresh

tobacco--"soothing herb," as they call it in the country. Moini Loungga had great need of being soothed, for he was, they did not know why, in a very bad humor.

At the same time Alvez, Coimbra, Ibn Hamis, and the Arab traders, or mongrels, came to pay their court to the powerful sovereign of Kazounde. "Marhaba," said the Arabs, which is their word of welcome in the language of Central Africa. Others clapped their hands and bowed to the ground. Some daubed themselves with mud, and gave signs of the greatest servility to this hideous majesty.

Moini Loungga hardly looked at all these people, and walked, keeping his limbs apart, as if the ground were rolling and pitching. He walked in this manner, or rather he rolled in the midst of waves of slaves, and if the traders feared that he might take a notion to apportion some of the prisoners to himself, the latter would no less dread falling into the power of such a brute.

Negoro had not left Alvez for a moment, and in his company presented his homage to the king. Both conversed in the native language, if, however, that word "converse" can be used of a conversation in which Moini Loungga only took part by monosyllables that hardly found a passage through his drunken lips. And still, did he not ask his friend, Alvez, to renew his supply of brandy just exhausted by large libations?

"King Loungga is welcome to the market of Kazounde," said the trader.

"I am thirsty," replied the monarch.

"He will take his part in the business of the great 'lakoni,'" added Alvez.

"Drink!" replied Moini Loungga.

"My friend Negoro is happy to see the King of Kazounde again, after such a long absence."

"Drink!" repeated the drunkard, whose whole person gave forth a disgusting odor of alcohol.

"Well, some 'pombe'! some mead!" exclaimed Jose-Antonio Alvez, like a man who well knew what Moini Loungga wanted.

"No, no!" replied the king; "my friend Alvez's brandy, and for each drop of his fire-water I shall give him----"

"A drop of blood from a white man!" exclaimed Negoro, after making a sign to Alvez, which the latter understood and approved.

"A white man! Put a white man to death!" repeated Moini Loungga, whose ferocious instincts were aroused by the Portuguese's proposition.

"One of Alvez's agents has been killed by this white man," returned

Negoro.

"Yes, my agent, Harris," replied the trader, "and his death must be avenged!"

"Send that white man to King Massongo, on the Upper Zaire, among the Assonas. They will cut him in pieces. They will eat him alive. They have not forgotten the taste of human flesh!" exclaimed Moini Loungga.

He was, in fact, the king of a tribe of man-eaters, that Massongo. It is only too true that in certain provinces of Central Africa cannibalism is still openly practised. Livingstone states it in his "Notes of Travel." On the borders of the Loualaba the Manyemas not only eat the men killed in the wars, but they buy slaves to devour them, saying that "human flesh is easily salted, and needs little seasoning." Those cannibals Cameron has found again among the Moene-Bongga, where they only feast on dead bodies after steeping them for several days in a running stream. Stanley has also encountered those customs of cannibalism among the inhabitants of the Oukonson. Cannibalism is evidently well spread among the tribes of the center.

But, cruel as was the kind of death proposed by the king for Dick Sand, it did not suit Negoro, who did not care to give up his victim.

"It was here," said he, "that the white man killed our comrade Harris."

"It is here that he ought to die!" added Alvez.

"Where you please, Alvez," replied Moini Loungga; "but a drop of fire-water for a drop of blood!"

"Yes," replied the trader, "fire-water, and you will see that it well merits that name! We shall make it blaze, this water! Jose-Antonio Alvez will offer a punch to the King Moini Loungga."

The drunkard shook his friend Alvez's hands. He could not contain his joy. His wives, his courtiers shared his ecstasy. They had never seen brandy blaze, and doubtless they counted on drinking it all blazing. Then, after the thirst for alcohol, the thirst for blood, so imperious among these savages, would be satisfied also.

Poor Dick Sand! What a horrible punishment awaited him. When we think of the terrible or grotesque effects of intoxication in civilized countries, we understand how far it can urge barbarous beings.

We will readily believe that the thought of torturing a white could displease none of the natives, neither Jose-Antonio Alvez, a negro like themselves, nor Coimbra, a mongrel of black blood, nor Negoro either, animated with a ferocious hatred against the whites.

The evening had come, an evening without twilight, that was going to make day change tonight almost at once, a propitious hour for the blazing of the brandy.

It was truly a triumphant idea of Alvez's, to offer a punch to this negro majesty, and to make him love brandy under a new form. Moini Loungga began to find that fire-water did not sufficiently justify its name. Perhaps, blazing and burning, it would tickle more agreeably the blunted papillas of his tongue.

The evening's program then comprised a punch first, a punishment afterwards.

Dick Sand, closely shut up in his dark prison, would only come out to go to his death. The other slaves, sold or not, had been put back in the barracks. There only remained at the "tchitoka," the traders, the overseers and the soldiers ready to take their part of the punch, if the king and his court allowed them.

Jose-Antonio Alvez, advised by Negoro, did the thing well. They brought a vast copper basin, capable of containing at least two hundred pints, which was placed in the middle of the great place. Barrels holding alcohol of inferior quality, but well refined, were emptied into the basin. They spared neither the cinnamon, nor the allspice, nor any of the ingredients that might improve this punch for savages.

All had made a circle around the king. Moini Loungga advanced staggering to the basin. One would say that this vat of brandy fascinated him, and that he was going to throw himself into it.

Alvez generously held him back and put a lighted match into his hand.

"Fire!" cried he with a cunning grimace of satisfaction.

"Fire!" replied Moini Loungga lashing the liquid with the end of the match.

What a flare and what an effect, when the bluish flames played on the surface of the basin. Alvez, doubtless to render that alcohol still sharper, had mingled with it a few handfuls of sea salt. The assistants' faces were then given that spectral lividness that the imagination ascribes to phantoms.

Those negroes, drunk in advance, began to cry out, to gesticulate, and, taking each other by the hand, formed an immense circle around the King of Kazounde.

Alvez, furnished with an enormous metal spoon, stirred the liquid, which threw a great white glare over those delirious monkeys.

Moini Loungga advanced. He seized the spoon from the trader's hands, plunged it into the basin, then, drawing it out full of punch in flames, he brought it to his lips.

What a cry the King of Kazounde then gave!

An act of spontaneous combustion had just taken place. The king had taken fire like a petroleum bonbon. This fire developed little heat, but it devoured none the less.

At this spectacle the natives' dance was suddenly stopped.

One of Moini Loungga's ministers threw himself on his sovereign to extinguish him; but, not less alcoholized than his master, he took fire in his turn.

In this way, Moini Loungga's whole court was in peril of burning up.

Alvez and Negoro did not know how to help his majesty. The women, frightened, had taken flight. As to Coimbra, he took his departure rapidly, well knowing his inflammable nature.

The king and the minister, who had fallen on the ground, were burning up, a prey to frightful sufferings.

In bodies so thoroughly alcoholized, combustion only produces a light and bluish flame, that water cannot extinguish. Even stifled outside, it would still continue to burn inwardly. When liquor has penetrated all the tissues, there exists no means of arresting the combustion.

A few minutes after, Moini Loungga and his minister had succumbed, but they still burned. Soon, in the place where they had fallen, there was nothing left but a few light coals, one or two pieces of the vertebral

column, fingers, toes, that the fire does not consume, in cases of spontaneous combustion, but which it covers with an infectious and penetrating soot.

It was all that was left of the King of Kazounde and of his minister.

CHAPTER XII.

A ROYAL BURIAL.

The next day, May 29th, the city of Kazounde presented a strange aspect. The natives, terrified, kept themselves shut up in their huts. They had never seen a king, who said he was of divine essence, nor a simple minister, die of this horrible death. They had already burned some of their fellow-beings, and the oldest could not forget certain culinary preparations relating to cannibalism.

They knew then how the incineration of a human body takes place with difficulty, and behold their king and his minister had burnt all alone! That seemed to them, and indeed ought to seem to them, inexplicable.

Jose-Antonio Alvez kept still in his house. He might fear that he would be held responsible for the accident. Negoro had informed him of what had passed, warning him to take care of himself. To charge him with Moini Loungga's death might be a bad affair, from which he might not be able to extricate himself without damage.

But Negoro had a good idea. By his means Alvez spread the report that the death of Kazounde's sovereign was supernatural; that the great Manitou only reserved it for his elect. The natives, so inclined to superstition, accepted this lie. The fire that came out of the bodies

of the king and his minister became a sacred fire. They had nothing to do but honor Moini Loungga by obsequies worthy of a man elevated to the rank of the gods.

These obsequies, with all the ceremonial connected with them among the African tribes, was an occasion offered to Negoro to make Dick Sand play a part. What this death of Moini Loungga was going to cost in blood, would be believed with difficulty, if the Central Africa travelers, Lieutenant Cameron among others, had not related facts that cannot be doubted.

The King of Kazounde's natural heir was the Queen Moini. In proceeding without delay with the funeral ceremonies she acted with sovereign authority, and could thus distance the competitors, among others that King of the Oukonson, who tended to encroach upon the rights of Kazounde's sovereigns. Besides, Moini, even by becoming queen, avoided the cruel fate reserved for the other wives of the deceased; at the same time she would get rid of the youngest ones, of whom she, first in date, had necessarily to complain. This result would particularly suit the ferocious temperament of that vixen. So she had it announced, with deer's horns and other instruments, that the obsequies of the defunct king would take place the next evening with all the usual ceremony.

No protestation was made, neither at court nor from the natives. Alvez and the other traders had nothing to fear from the accession of this Queen Moini. With a few presents, a few flattering remarks, they would

easily subject her to their influence. Thus the royal heritage was transmitted without difficulty. There was terror only in the harem, and not without reason.

The preparatory labors for the funeral were commenced the same day. At the end of the principal street of Kazounde flowed a deep and rapid stream, an affluent of the Coango. The question was to turn this stream aside, so as to leave its bed dry. It was in that bed that the royal grave must be dug. After the burial the stream would be restored to its natural channel.

The natives were busily employed in constructing a dam, that forced the stream to make a provisional bed across the plain of Kazounde. At the last tableau of this funeral ceremony the barricade would be broken, and the torrent would take its old bed again.

Negoro intended Dick Sand to complete the number of victims sacrificed on the king's tomb. He had been a witness of the young novice's irresistible movement of anger, when Harris had acquainted him with the death of Mrs. Weldon and little Jack.

Negoro, cowardly rascal, had not exposed himself to the same fate as his accomplice. But now, before a prisoner firmly fastened by the feet and hands, he supposed he had nothing to fear, and resolved to pay him a visit. Negoro was one of those miserable wretches who are not satisfied with torturing their victims; they must also enjoy their sufferings.

Toward the middle of the day, then, he repaired to the barrack where Dick Sand was guarded, in sight of an overseer. There, closely bound, was lying the young novice, almost entirely deprived of food for twenty-four hours, weakened by past misery, tortured by those bands that entered into his flesh; hardly able to turn himself, he was waiting for death, no matter how cruel it might be, as a limit to so many evils.

However, at the sight of Negoro he shuddered from head to foot. He made an instinctive effort to break the bands that prevented him from throwing himself on that miserable man and having revenge.

But Hercules himself would not succeed in breaking them. He understood that it was another kind of contest that was going to take place between the two, and arming himself with calmness, Dick Sand compelled himself to look Negoro right in the face, and decided not to honor him with a reply, no matter what he might say.

"I believed it to be my duty," Negoro said to him it first, "to come to salute my young captain for the last time, and to let him know how I regret, for his sake, that he does not command here any longer, as he commanded on board the 'Pilgrim.'"

And, seeing that Dick Sand did not reply:

"What, captain, do you no longer recognize your old cook? He comes,

however, to take your orders, and to ask you what he ought to serve for your breakfast."

At the same time Negoro brutally kicked the young novice, who was lying on the ground.

"Besides," added he, "I should have another question to address to you, my young captain. Could you yet explain to me, how, wishing to land on the American coast, you have ended by arriving in Angola, where you are?"

Certainly, Dick Sand had no more need of the Portuguese's words to understand what he had truly divined, when he knew at last that the "Pilgrim's" compass must have been made false by this traitor.
But Negoro's question was an avowal. Still he only replied by a contemptuous silence.

"You will acknowledge, captain," continued Kegoro, "that it was fortunate for you that there was a seaman on board--a real one, at that. Great God, where would we be without him? Instead of perishing on some breaker, where the tempest would have thrown you, you have arrived, thanks to him, in a friendly port, and if it is to any one that you owe being at last in a safe place, it is to that seaman whom you have wronged in despising, my young master!"

Speaking thus, Negoro, whose apparent calmness was only the result of an immense effort, had brought his form near Dick Sand. His face,

suddenly become ferocious, touched him so closely that one would believe that he was going to devour him. This rascal could no longer contain his fury.

"Every dog has his day!" he exclaimed, in the paroxysm of fury excited in him by his victim's calmness. "To-day I am captain, I am master! Your life is in my hands!"

"Take it," Sand replied, without emotion. "But, know there is in heaven a God, avenger of all crimes, and your punishment is not distant!"

"If God occupies himself with human beings, there is only time for Him to take care of you!"

"I am ready to appear before the Supreme Judge," replied Dick Sand, coldly, "and death will not make me afraid."

"We shall see about that!" howled Negoro. "You count on help of some kind, perhaps--help at Kazounde, where Alvez and I are all-powerful! You are a fool! You say to yourself, perhaps, that your companions are still there, that old Tom and the others. Undeceive yourself. It is a long time since they were sold and sent to Zanzibar--too fortunate if they do not die of fatigue on the way!"

"God has a thousand ways of doing justice," replied Dick Sand. "The smallest instrument is sufficient for him. Hercules is free."

"Hercules!" exclaimed Negoro, striking the ground with his foot; "he perished long ago under the lions' and panthers' teeth. I regret only one thing, that is, that those ferocious beasts should have forestalled my vengeance!"

"If Hercules is dead," replied Dick Sand, "Dingo is alive. A dog like that, Negoro, is more than enough to take revenge on a man of your kind. I know you well, Negoro; you are not brave. Dingo will seek for you; it will know how to find you again. Some day you will die under his teeth!"

"Miserable boy!" exclaimed the Portuguese, exasperated. "Miserable boy! Dingo died from a ball that I fired at it. It is dead, like Mrs. Weldon and her son; dead, as all the survivors of the 'Pilgrim' shall die!"

"And as you yourself shall die before long," replied Dick Sand, whose tranquil look made the Portuguese grow pale.

Negoro, beside himself, was on the point of passing from words to deeds, and strangling his unarmed prisoner with his hands. Already he had sprung upon him, and was shaking him with fury, when a sudden reflection stopped him. He remembered that he was going to kill his victim, that all would be over, and that this would spare him the twenty-four hours of torture he intended for him. He then stood up, said a few words to the overseer, standing impassive, commanded him to

watch closely over the prisoner, and went out of the barrack.

Instead of casting him down, this scene had restored all Dick Sand's moral force. His physical energy underwent a happy reaction, and at the same time regained the mastery. In bending over him in his rage, had Negoro slightly loosened the bands that till then had rendered all movement impossible? It was probable, for Dick Sand thought that his members had more play than before the arrival of his executioner. The young novice, feeling solaced, said to himself that perhaps it would be possible to get his arms free without too much effort. Guarded as he was, in a prison firmly shut, that would doubtless be only a torture--only a suffering less; but it was such a moment in life when the smallest good is invaluable.

Certainly, Dick Sand hoped for nothing. No human succor could come to him except from outside, and whence could it come to him? He was then resigned. To tell the truth, he no longer cared to live. He thought of all those who had met death before him, and he only aspired to join them. Negoro had just repeated what Harris had told him: "Mrs. Weldon and little Jack had succumbed." It was, indeed, only too probable that Hercules, exposed to so many dangers, must have perished also, and from a cruel death. Tom and his companions were at a distance, forever lost to him--Dick Sand ought to believe it. To hope for anything but the end of his troubles, by a death that could not be more terrible than his life, would be signal folly. He then prepared to die, above all throwing himself upon God, and asking courage from Him to go on to the end without giving way. But thoughts of God are good and noble

thoughts! It is not in vain that one lifts his soul to Him who can do all, and, when Dick Sand had offered his whole sacrifice, he found that, if one could penetrate to the bottom of his heart, he might perhaps discover there a last ray of hope--that glimmer which a breath from on high can change, in spite of all probabilities, into dazzling light.

The hours passed away. Night came. The rays of light, that penetrated through the thatch of the barrack, gradually disappeared. The last noises of the "tchitoka," which, during that day had been very silent, after the frightful uproar of the night before--those last noises died out. Darkness became very profound in the interior of the narrow prison. Soon all reposed in the city of Kazounde.

Dick Sand fell into a restoring sleep, that lasted two hours. After that he awoke, still stronger. He succeeded in freeing one of his arms from their bands--it was already a little reduced--and it was a delight for him to be able to extend it and draw it back at will.

The night must be half over. The overseer slept with heavy sleep, due to a bottle of brandy, the neck of which was still held in his shut hand. The savage had emptied it to the last drop. Dick Sand's first idea was to take possession of his jailer's weapons, which might be of great use to him in case of escape; but at that moment he thought he heard a slight scratching at the lower part of the door of the barrack. Helping himself with his arms, he succeeded in crawling as far as the door-sill without wakening the overseer.

Dick Sand was not mistaken. The scratching continued, and in a more distinct manner. It seemed that from the outside some one was digging the earth under the door. Was it an animal? Was it a man?

"Hercules! If it were Hercules!" the young novice said to himself.

His eyes were fixed on his guard; he was motionless, and under the influence of a leaden sleep. Dick Sand, bringing his lips to the door-sill, thought he might risk murmuring Hercules's name. A moan, like a low and plaintive bark, replied to him.

"It is not Hercules," said Dick to himself, "but it is Dingo. He has scented me as far as this barrack. Should he bring me another word from Hercules? But if Dingo is not dead, Negoro has lied, and perhaps--"

At that moment a paw passed under the door. Dick Sand seized it, and recognized Dingo's paw. But, if it had a letter, that letter could only be attached to its neck. What to do? Was it possible to make that hole large enough for Dingo to put in its head? At all events, he must try it.

But hardly had Dick Sand begun to dig the soil with his nails, than barks that were not Dingo's sounded over the place. The faithful animal had just been scented by the native dogs, and doubtless could do nothing more than take to flight. Some detonations burst forth. The

overseer half awoke. Dick Sand, no longer able to think of escaping, because the alarm was given, must then roll himself up again in his corner, and, after a lovely hope, he saw appear that day which would be without a to-morrow for him.

During all that day the grave-diggers' labors were pushed on with briskness. A large number of natives took part, under the direction of Queen Moini's first minister. All must be ready at the hour named, under penalty of mutilation, for the new sovereign promised to follow the defunct king's ways, point by point.

The waters of the brook having been turned aside, it was in the dry bed that the vast ditch was dug, to a depth of ten feet, over an extent of fifty feet long by ten wide.

Toward the end of the day they began to carpet it, at the bottom and along the walls, with living women, chosen among Moini Loungga's slaves. Generally those unfortunates are buried alive. But, on account of this strange and perhaps miraculous death of Moini Loungga, it had been decided that they should be drowned near the body of their master.

One cannot imagine what those horrible hecatombs are, when a powerful chief's memory must be fitly honored among these tribes of Central Africa. Cameron says that more than a hundred victims were thus sacrificed at the funeral ceremonies of the King of Kassongo's father.

It is also the custom for the defunct king to be dressed in his most costly clothes before being laid in his tomb. But this time, as there was nothing left of the royal person except a few burnt bones, it was necessary to proceed in another manner. A willow manikin was made, representing Moini Loungga sufficiently well, perhaps advantageously, and in it they shut up the remains the combustion had spared. The manikin was then clothed with the royal vestments--we know that those clothes are not worth much--and they did not forget to ornament it with Cousin Benedict's famous spectacles. There was something terribly comic in this masquerade.

The ceremony would take place with torches and with great pomp. The whole population of Kazounde, native or not, must assist at it.

When the evening had come, a long cortège descended the principal street, from the tchitoka as far as the burial place. Cries, funeral dances, magicians' incantations, noises from instruments and detonations from old muskets from the arsenals--nothing was lacking in it.

Jose-Antonio Alvez, Coimbra, Negoro, the Arab traders and their overseers had increased the ranks of Kazounde's people. No one had yet left the great lakoni. Queen Moini would not permit it, and it would not be prudent to disobey the orders of one who was trying the trade of sovereign.

The body of the king, laid in a palanquin, was carried in the last

ranks of the cortège. It was surrounded by his wives of the second order, some of whom were going to accompany him beyond this life. Queen Moini, in great state, marched behind what might be called the catafalque. It was positively night when all the people arrived on the banks of the brook; but the resin torches, shaken by the porters, threw great bursts of light over the crowd.

The ditch was seen distinctly. It was carpeted with black, living bodies, for they moved under the chains that bound them to the ground. Fifty slaves were waiting there till the torrent should close over them. The majority were young natives, some resigned and mute, others giving a few groans. The wives all dressed as for a fête, and who must perish, had been chosen by the queen.

One of these victims, she who bore the title of second wife, was bent on her hands and knees, to serve as a royal footstool, as she had done in the king's lifetime. The third wife came to hold up the manikin, while the fourth lay at its feet, in the guise of a cushion.

Before the manikin, at the end of the ditch, a post, painted red, rose from the earth. To this post was fastened a white man, who was going to be counted also among the victims of these bloody obsequies.

That white man was Dick Sand. His body, half naked, bore the marks of the tortures he had already suffered by Negoro's orders. Tied to this post, he waited for death like a man who has no hope except in another life.

However, the moment had not yet arrived when the barricade would be broken.

On a signal from the queen, the fourth wife, she who was placed at the king's feet, was beheaded by Kazounde's executioner, and her blood flowed into the ditch. It was the beginning of a frightful scene of butchery. Fifty slaves fell under the executioner's knife. The bed of the river ran waves of blood.

During half an hour the victims' cries mingled with the assistants' vociferations, and one would seek in vain in that crowd for a sentiment of repugnance or of pity.

At last Queen Moini made a gesture, and the barricade that held back the upper waters gradually opened. By a refinement of cruelty, the current was allowed to filter down the river, instead of being precipitated by an instantaneous bursting open of the dam. Slow death instead of quick death!

The water first drowned the carpet of slaves which covered the bottom of the ditch. Horrible leaps were made by those living creatures, who struggled against asphyxia. They saw Dick Sand, submerged to the knees, make a last effort to break his bonds. But the water mounted. The last heads disappeared under the torrent, that took its course again, and nothing indicated that at the bottom of this river was dug a tomb, where one hundred victims had just perished in honor of

Kazounde's king.

The pen would refuse to paint such pictures, if regard for the truth did not impose the duty of describing them in their abominable reality. Man is still there, in those sad countries. To be ignorant of it is not allowable.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE INTERIOR OF A FACTORY.

Harris and Negoro had told a lie in saying that Mrs. Weldon and little Jack were dead. She, her son, and Cousin Benedict were then in Kazounde.

After the assault on the ant-hill, they had been taken away beyond the camp on the Coanza by Harris and Negoro, accompanied by a dozen native soldiers.

A palanquin, the "kitanda" of the country, received Mrs. Weldon and little Jack. Why such care on the part of such a man as Negoro? Mrs. Weldon was afraid to explain it to herself.

The journey from the Counza to Kazounde was made rapidly and without fatigue. Cousin Benedict, on whom trouble seemed to have no effect, walked with a firm step. As he was allowed to search to the right and to the left, he did not think of complaining. The little troop, then, arrived at Kazounde eight days before Ibn Hamis's caravan. Mrs. Weldon was shut up, with her child and Cousin Benedict, in Alvez's establishment.

Little Jack was much better. On leaving the marshy country, where he had taken the fever, he gradually became better, and now he was

doing well. No doubt neither he nor his mother could have borne the hardships of the caravan; but owing to the manner in which they had made this journey, during which they had been given a certain amount of care, they were in a satisfactory condition, physically at least.

As to her companions, Mrs. Weldon had heard nothing of them. After having seen Hercules flee into the forest, she did not know what had become of him. As to Dick Sand, as Harris and Negoro were no longer there to torture him, she hoped that his being a white man would perhaps spare him some bad treatment. As to Nan, Tom, Bat, Austin, and Acteon, they were blacks, and it was too certain that they would be treated as such. Poor people! who should never have trodden that land of Africa, and whom treachery had just cast there.

When Ibn Hamis's caravan had arrived at Kazounde, Mrs. Weldon, having no communication with the outer world, could not know of the fact: neither did the noises from the lakoni tell her anything. She did not know that Tom and his friends had been sold to a trader from Oujiji, and that they would soon set out. She neither knew of Harris's punishment, nor of King Moini Loungga's death, nor of the royal funeral ceremonies, that had added Dick Sand to so many other victims. So the unfortunate woman found herself alone at Kazounde, at the trader's mercy, in Negoro's power, and she could not even think of dying in order to escape him, because her child was with her.

Mrs. Weldon was absolutely ignorant of the fate that awaited her. Harris and Negoro had not addressed a word to her during the whole

journey from the Coanza to Kazounde. Since her arrival, she had not seen either of them again, and she could not leave the enclosure around the rich trader's private establishment. Is it necessary to say now that Mrs. Weldon had found no help in her large child, Cousin Benedict? That is understood.

When the worthy savant learned that he was not on the American continent, as he believed, he was not at all anxious to know how that could have happened. No! His first movement was a gesture of anger. The insects that he imagined he had been the first to discover in America, those tsetses and others, were only mere African hexapodes, found by many naturalists before him, in their native places. Farewell, then, to the glory of attaching his name to those discoveries! In fact, as he was in Africa, what could there be astonishing in the circumstance that Cousin Benedict had collected African insects.

But the first anger over, Cousin Benedict said to himself that the "Land of the Pharaohs"--so he still called it--possessed incomparable entomological riches, and that so far as not being in the "Land of the Incas" was concerned, he would not lose by the change.

"Ah!" he repeated, to himself, and even repeated to Mrs. Weldon, who hardly listened to him, "this is the country of the manticores, those coleopteres with long hairy feet, with welded and sharp wing-shells, with enormous mandibles, of which the most remarkable is the tuberculous manticore. It is the country of the calosomes with

golden ends; of the Goliaths of Guinea and of the Gabon, whose feet are furnished with thorns; of the sacred Egyptian ateuchus, that the Egyptians of Upper Egypt venerated as gods. It is here that those sphinxes with heads of death, now spread over all Europe, belong, and also those 'Idias Bigote,' whose sting is particularly dreaded by the Senegalians of the coast. Yes; there are superb things to be found here, and I shall find them, if these honest people will only let me."

We know who those "honest people" were, of whom Cousin Benedict did not dream of complaining. Besides, it has been stated, the entomologist had enjoyed a half liberty in Negoro's and Harris's company, a liberty of which Dick Sand had absolutely deprived him during the voyage from the coast to the Coanza. The simple-hearted savant had been very much touched by that condescension.

Finally, Cousin Benedict would be the happiest of entomologists if he had not suffered a loss to which he was extremely sensitive. He still possessed his tin box, but his glasses no longer rested on his nose, his magnifying glass no longer hung from his neck! Now, a naturalist without his magnifying glass and his spectacles, no longer exists. Cousin Benedict, however, was destined never to see those two optical attendants again, because they had been buried with the royal manikin. So, when he found some insect, he was reduced to thrusting it into his eyes to distinguish its most prominent peculiarities. Ah! it was a great loss to Cousin Benedict, and he would have paid a high price for a pair of spectacles, but that article was not current on the lakonis of Kazounde. At all events, Cousin Benedict could go and

come in Jose-Antonio Alvez's establishment. They knew he was incapable of seeking to flee. Besides, a high palisade separated the factory from the other quarters of the city, and it would not be easy to get over it.

But, if it was well enclosed, this enclosure did not measure less than a mile in circumference. Trees, bushes of a kind peculiar to Africa, great herbs, a few rivulets, the thatch of the barracks and the huts, were more than necessary to conceal the continent's rarest insects, and to make Cousin Benedict's happiness, at least, if not his fortune. In fact, he discovered some hexapodes, and nearly lost his eyesight in trying to study them without spectacles. But, at least, he added to his precious collection, and laid the foundation of a great work on African entomology. If his lucky star would let him discover a new insect, to which he would attach his name, he would have nothing more to desire in this world!

If Alvez's establishment was sufficiently large for Cousin Benedict's scientific promenades, it seemed immense to little Jack, who could walk about there without restraint. But the child took little interest in the pleasures so natural to his age. He rarely quitted his mother, who did not like to leave him alone, and always dreaded some misfortune.

Little Jack often spoke of his father, whom he had not seen for so long. He asked to be taken back to him. He inquired after all, for old Nan, for his friend Hercules, for Bat, for Austin, for Acteon, and for

Dingo, that appeared, indeed, to have deserted him. He wished to see his comrade, Dick Sand, again. His young imagination was very much affected, and only lived in those remembrances. To his questions Mrs. Weldon could only reply by pressing him to her heart, while covering him with kisses. All that she could do was not to cry before him.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Weldon had not failed to observe that, if bad treatment had been spared her during the journey from the Coanza, nothing in Alvez's establishment indicated that there would be any change of conduct in regard to her. There were in the factory only the slaves in the trader's service. All the others, which formed the object of his trade, had been penned up in the barracks of the tchitoka, then sold to the brokers from the interior.

Now, the storehouses of the establishment were overflowing with stuffs and ivory. The stuffs were intended to be exchanged in the provinces of the center, the ivory to be exported from the principal markets of the continent.

In fact, then, there were few people in the factory. Mrs. Weldon and Jack occupied a hut apart; Cousin Benedict another. They did not communicate with the trader's servants. They ate together. The food, consisting of goat's flesh or mutton, vegetables, tapioca, sorgho, and the fruits of the country, was sufficient.

Halima, a young slave, was especially devoted to Mrs. Weldon's service. In her way, and as she could, she even evinced for her a kind

of savage, but certainty sincere, affection.

Mrs. Weldon hardly saw Jose-Antonio Alvez, who occupied the principal house of the factory. She did not see Negoro at all, as he lodged outside; but his absence was quite inexplicable. This absence continued to astonish her, and make her feel anxious at the same time.

"What does he want? What is he waiting for?" she asked herself. "Why has he brought us to Kazounde?"

So had passed the eight days that preceded and followed the arrival of Ibn Hamis's caravan--that is, the two days before the funeral ceremonies, and the six days that followed.

In the midst of so many anxieties, Mrs. Weldon could not forget that her husband must be a prey to the most frightful despair, on not seeing either his wife or his son return to San Francisco. Mr. Weldon could not know that his wife had adopted that fatal idea of taking passage on board the "Pilgrim," and he would believe that she had embarked on one of the steamers of the Trans-Pacific Company. Now, these steamers arrived regularly, and neither Mrs. Weldon, nor Jack, nor Cousin Benedict were on them. Besides, the "Pilgrim" itself was already overdue at Sun Francisco. As she did not reappear, James W. Weldon must now rank her in the category of ships supposed to be lost, because not heard of.

What a terrible blow for him, when news of the departure of the

"Pilgrim" and the embarkation of Mrs. Weldon should reach him from his correspondents in Auckland! What had he done? Had he refused to believe that his son and she had perished at sea? But then, where would he search? Evidently on the isles of the Pacific, perhaps on the American coast. But never, no never, would the thought occur to him that she had been thrown on the coast of this fatal Africa!

So thought Mrs. Weldon. But what could she attempt? Flee! How? She was closely watched. And then to flee was to venture into those thick forests, in the midst of a thousand dangers, to attempt a journey of more than two hundred miles to reach the coast. And meanwhile Mrs. Weldon was decided to do it, if no other means offered themselves for her to recover her liberty. But, first, she wished to know exactly what Negoro's designs were.

At last she knew them.

On the 6th of June, three days after the burial of Kazounde's king, Negoro entered the factory, where he had not yet set foot since his return. He went right to the hut occupied by his prisoner.

Mrs. Weldon was alone. Cousin Benedict was taking one of his scientific walks. Little Jack, watched by the slave Halima, was walking in the enclosure of the establishment.

Negoro pushed open the door of the hut without knocking.

"Mrs. Weldon," said he, "Tom and his companions have been sold for the markets of Oujiji!"

"May God protect them!" said Mrs. "Weldon, shedding tears.

"Nan died on the way, Dick Sand has perished----"

"Nan dead! and Dick!" cried Mrs. Weldon.

"Yes, it is just for your captain of fifteen to pay for Harris's murder with his life," continued Negoro. "You are alone in Kazounde, mistress; alone, in the power of the 'Pilgrim's' old cook--absolutely alone, do you understand?"

What Negoro said was only too true, even concerning Tom and his friends. The old black man, his son Bat, Acteon and Austin had departed the day before with the trader of Oujiji's caravan, without the consolation of seeing Mrs. Weldon again, without even knowing that their companion in misery was in Kazounde, in Alvez's establishment. They had departed for the lake country, a journey figured by hundreds of miles, that very few accomplish, and from which very few return.

"Well?" murmured Mrs. Weldon, looking at Negoro without answering.

"Mrs. Weldon," returned the Portuguese, in an abrupt voice, "I could revenge myself on you for the bad treatment I suffered on board the 'Pilgrim.' But Dick Sand's death will satisfy my vengeance. Now,

mistress, I become the merchant again, and behold my projects with regard to you."

Mrs. Weldon looked at him without saying a word.

"You," continued the Portuguese, "your child, and that imbecile who runs after the flies, you have a commercial value which I intend to utilize. So I am going to sell you."

"I am of a free race," replied Mrs. Weldon, in a firm tone.

"You are a slave, if I wish it."

"And who would buy a white woman?"

"A man who will pay for her whatever I shall ask him."

Mrs. Weldon bent her head for a moment, for she knew that anything was possible in that frightful country.

"You have heard?" continued Negoro.

"Who is this man to whom you will pretend to sell me?" replied Mrs. Weldon.

"To sell you or to re-sell you. At least, I suppose so!" added the Portuguese, sneering.

"The name of this man?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"This man--he is James W. Weldon, your husband."

"My husband!" exclaimed Mrs. Weldon, who could not believe what she had just heard.

"Himself, Mrs. Weldon--your husband, to whom I do not wish simply to restore his wife, his child, and his cousin, but to sell them, and, at a high price."

Mrs. Weldon asked herself if Negoro was not setting a trap for her. However, she believed he was speaking seriously. To a wretch to whom money is everything, it seems that we can trust, when business is in question. Now, this was business.

"And when do you propose to make this business operation?" returned Mrs. Weldon.

"As soon as possible."

"Where?"

"Just here. Certainly James Weldon will not hesitate to come as far as Kazounde for his wife and son."

"No, he will not hesitate. But who will tell him?"

"I! I shall go to San Francisco to find James Weldon. I have money enough for this voyage."

"The money stolen from on board the 'Pilgrim?'"

"Yes, that, and more besides," replied Negoro, insolently. "But, if I wish to sell you soon, I also wish to sell you at a high price. I think that James Weldon will not regard a hundred thousand dollars----"

"He will not regard them, if he can give them," replied Mrs. Weldon, coldly. "Only my husband, to whom you will say, doubtless, that I am held a prisoner at Kazounde, in Central Africa----"

"Precisely!"

"My husband will not believe you without proofs, and he will not be so imprudent as to come to Kazounde on your word alone."

"He will come here," returned Negoro, "if I bring him a letter written by you, which will tell him your situation, which will describe me as a faithful servant, escaped from the hands of these savages."

"My hand shall never write that letter!" Mrs. Weldon replied, in a still colder manner.

"You refuse?" exclaimed Negoro.

"I refuse!"

The thought of the dangers her husband would pass through in coming as far as Kazounde, the little dependence that could be placed on the Portuguese's promises, the facility with which the latter could retain James Weldon, after taking the ransom agreed upon, all these reasons taken together made Mrs. Weldon refuse Negoro's proposition flatly and at once. Mrs. Weldon spoke, thinking only of herself, forgetting her child for the moment.

"You shall write that letter!" continued the Portuguese.

"No!" replied Mrs. Weldon again.

"Ah, take care!" exclaimed Negoro. "You are not alone here! Your child is, like you, in my power, and I well know how----"

Mrs. Weldon wished to reply that that would be impossible. Her heart was beating as if it would break; she was voiceless.

"Mrs. Weldon," said Negoro, "you will reflect on the offer I have made you. In eight days you will have handed me a letter to James Weldon's address, or you will repent of it."

That said, the Portuguese retired, without giving vent to his anger; but it was easy to see that nothing would stop him from constraining Mrs. Weldon to obey him.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOME NEWS OF DR. LIVINGSTONE.

Left alone, Mrs. Weldon at first only fixed her mind on this thought, that eight days would pass before Negoro would return for a definite answer. There was time to reflect and decide on a course of action. There could be no question of the Portuguese's probity except in his own interest. The "market value" that he attributed to his prisoner would evidently be a safeguard for her, and protect her for the time, at least, against any temptation that might put her in danger. Perhaps she would think of a compromise that would restore her to her husband without obliging Mr. Weldon to come to Kazounde. On receipt of a letter from his wife, she well knew that James Weldon would set out. He would brave the perils of this journey into the most dangerous countries of Africa. But, once at Kazounde, when Negoro should have that fortune of a hundred thousand dollars in his hands, what guaranty would James W. Weldon, his wife, his son and Cousin Benedict have, that they would be allowed to depart? Could not Queen Moini's caprice prevent them? Would not this "sale" of Mrs. Weldon and hers be better accomplished if it took place at the coast, at some point agreed upon, which would spare Mr. Weldon both the dangers of the journey to the interior, and the difficulties, not to say the impossibilities, of a return?

So reflected Mrs. Weldon. That was why she had refused at once to

accede to Negoro's proposition and give him a letter for her husband. She also thought that, if Negoro had put off his second visit for eight days, it was because he needed that time to prepare for his journey. If not, he would return sooner to force her consent.

"Would he really separate me from my child?" murmured she.

At that moment Jack entered the hut, and, by an instinctive movement, his mother seized him, as if Negoro were there, ready to snatch him from her.

"You are in great grief, mother?" asked the little boy.

"No, dear Jack," replied Mrs. Weldon; "I was thinking of your papa! You would be very glad to see him again?"

"Oh! yes, mother! Is he going to come?"

"No! no! He must not come!"

"Then we will go to see him again?"

"Yes, darling Jack!"

"With my friend Dick--and Hercules--and old Tom?"

"Yes! yes!" replied Mrs. Weldon, putting her head down to hide her

tears.

"Has papa written to you?" asked little Jack.

"No, my love."

"Then you are going to write to him, mother?"

"Yes--yes--perhaps!" replied Mrs. Weldon.

And without knowing it, little Jack entered directly into his mother's thoughts. To avoid answering him further, she covered him with kisses.

It must be stated that another motive of some value was joined to the different reasons that had urged Mrs. Weldon to resist Negoro's injunctions. Perhaps Mrs. Weldon had a very unexpected chance of being restored to liberty without her husband's intervention, and even against Negoro's will. It was only a faint ray of hope, very vague as yet, but it was one.

In fact, a few words of conversation, overheard by her several days before, made her foresee a possible succor near at hand--one might say a providential succor.

Alvez and a mongrel from Oujiji were talking a few steps from the hut occupied by Mrs. Weldon. It is not astonishing that the slave-trade was the subject of conversation between those worthy merchants.

The two brokers in human flesh were talking business. They were discussing the future of their commerce, and were worried about the efforts the English were making to destroy it--not only on the exterior, by cruisers, but in the interior, by their missionaries and their travelers.

Jose-Antonio Alvez found that the explorations of these hardy pioneers could only injure commercial operations. His interlocutor shared his views, and thought that all these visitors, civil or religious, should be received with gun-shots.

This had been done to some extent. But, to the great displeasure of the traders, if they killed some of these curious ones, others escaped them. Now, these latter, on returning to their country, recounted "with exaggerations," Alvez said, the horrors of the slave-trade, and that injured this commerce immensely--it being too much diminished already.

The mongrel agreed to that, and deplored it; above all, concerning the markets of N'yangwe, of Oujiji, of Zanzibar, and of all the great lake regions. There had come successively Speke, Grant, Livingstone, Stanley, and others. It was an invasion! Soon all England and all America would occupy the country!

Alvez sincerely pitied his comrade, and he declared that the provinces of Western Africa had been, till that time, less badly treated--that is to say, less visited; but the epidemic of travelers was beginning

to spread. If Kazounde had been spared, it was not so with Cassange, and with Bihe, where Alvez owned factories. It may be remembered, also, that Harris had spoken to Negoro of a certain Lieutenant Cameron, who might, indeed, have the presumption to cross Africa from one side to the other, and after entering it by Zanzibar, leave it by Angola.

In fact, the trader had reason to fear, and we know that, some years after, Cameron to the south and Stanley to the north, were going to explore these little-known provinces of the west, describe the permanent monstrosities of the trade, unveil the guilty complicities of foreign agents, and make the responsibility fall on the right parties.

Neither Alvez nor the mongrel could know anything yet of this exploration of Cameron's and of Stanley's; but what they did know, what they said, what Mrs. Weldon heard, and what was of such great interest to her--in a word, what had sustained her in her refusal to subscribe at once to Negoro's demands, was this:

Before long, very probably, Dr. David Livingstone would arrive at Kazounde.

Now, the arrival of Livingstone with his escort, the influence which the great traveler enjoyed in Africa, the concourse of Portuguese authorities from Angola that could not fail to meet him, all that might bring about the deliverance of Mrs. Weldon and hers, in spite of

Negoro, in spite of Alvez. It was perhaps their restoration to their country within a short time, and without James W. Weldon risking his life in a journey, the result of which could only be deplorable.

But was there any probability that Dr. Livingstone would soon visit that part of the continent? Yes, for in following that missionary tour, he was going to complete the exploration of Central Africa.

We know the heroic life of this son of the tea merchant, who lived in Blantyre, a village in the county of Lanark. Born on the 13th of March, 1813, David Livingstone, the second of six children, became, by force of study, both a theologian and doctor. After making his novitiate in the "London Missionary Society," he embarked for the Cape in 1840, with the intention of joining the missionary Moffat in Southern Africa.

From the Cape, the future traveler repaired to the country of the Bechnanas, which he explored for the first time, returned to Kuruman and married Moffat's daughter, that brave companion who would be worthy of him. In 1843 he founded a mission in the valley of the Mabotsa.

Four years later, we find him established at Kolobeng, two hundred and twenty-five miles to the north of Kuruman, in the country of the Bechnanas.

Two years after, in 1849, Livingstone left Kolobeng with his wife, his

three children and two friends, Messrs. Oswell and Murray. August 1st, of the same year, he discovered Lake N'gami, and returned to Kolobeng, by descending the Zouga.

In this journey Livingstone, stopped by the bad will of the natives, had not passed beyond the N'gami. A second attempt was not more fortunate. A third must succeed. Then, taking a northern route, again with his family and Mr. Oswell, after frightful sufferings (for lack of food, for lack of water) that almost cost him the lives of his children, he reached the country of the Makalolos beside the Chobe, a branch of the Zambezi. The chief, Sebituane, joined him at Linyanti. At the end of June, 1851, the Zambezi was discovered, and the doctor returned to the Cape to bring his family to England.

In fact, the intrepid Livingstone wished to be alone while risking his life in the daring journey he was going to undertake.

On leaving the Cape this time, the question was to cross Africa obliquely from the south to the west, so as to reach Saint Paul de Loanda.

On the third of June, 1852, the doctor set out with a few natives. He arrived at Kuruman and skirted the Desert of Kalahari. The 31st December he entered Litoubarouba and found the country of the Bechnanas ravaged by the Boers, old Dutch colonists, who were masters of the Cape before the English took possession of it.

Livingstone left Litoubarouba on the 15th of January, 1853, penetrated to the center of the country of the Bamangouatos, and, on May 23d, he arrived at Linyanti, where the young sovereign of the Makalolos, Sckeletou, received him with great honor.

There, the doctor held back by the intense fevers, devoted himself to studying the manners of the country, and, for the first time, he could ascertain the ravages made by the slave-trade in Africa.

One month after he descended the Chobe, reached the Zambezi, entered Naniele, visited Katonga and Libonta, arrived at the confluence of the Zambezi and the Leeba, formed the project of ascending by that watercourse as far as the Portuguese possessions of the west, and, after nine weeks' absence, returned to Linyanti to make preparations.

On the 11th of November, 1853, the doctor, accompanied by twenty-seven Makalolos, left Linyanti, and on the 27th of December he reached the mouth of the Leeba. This watercourse was ascended as far as the territory of the Balondas, there where it receives the Makonda, which comes from the east. It was the first time that a white man penetrated into this region.

January 14th, Livingstone entered Shinte's residence. He was the most powerful sovereign of the Balondas. He gave Livingstone a good reception, and, the 26th of the same month, after crossing the Leeba, he arrived at King Katema's. There, again, a good reception, and thence the departure of the little troop that on the 20th of February

encamped on the borders of Lake Dilolo.

On setting out from this point, a difficult country, exigencies of the natives, attacks from the tribes, revolt of his companions, threats of death, everything conspired against Livingstone, and a less energetic man would have abandoned the party. The doctor persevered, and on the 4th of April, he reached the banks of the Coango, a large watercourse which forms the eastern boundary of the Portuguese possessions, and flows northward into the Zaire.

Six days after, Livingstone entered Cassange, where the trader Alvez had seen him passing through, and on the 31st of May he arrived at Saint Paul de Loanda. For the first time, and after a journey of two years, Africa had just been crossed obliquely from the south to the west.

David Livingstone left Loanda, September 24th of the same year. He skirted the right bank of that Coanza that had been so fatal to Dick Sand and his party, arrived at the confluence of the Lombe, crossing numerous caravans of slaves, passed by Cassange again, left it on the 20th of February, crossed the Coango, and reached the Zambezi at Kawawa. On the 8th of June he discovered Lake Dilolo again, saw Shinte again, descended the Zambezi, and reentered Linyanti, which he left on the 3d of November, 1855.

This second part of the journey, which would lead the doctor toward the eastern coast, would enable him to finish completely this crossing

of Africa from the west to the east.

After having visited the famous Victoria Falls, the "thundering foam," David Livingstone abandoned the Zambezi to take a northeastern direction. The passage across the territory of the Batokas (natives who were besotted by the inhalation of hemp), the visit to Semalembone (the powerful chief of the region), the crossing of the Kafone, the finding of the Zambezi again, the visit to King Mbourouma, the sight of the ruins of Zambo (an ancient Portuguese city), the encounter with the Chief Mpende on the 17th of January, 1856 (then at war with the Portuguese), the final arrival at Tete, on the border of the Zambezi, on the 2d of March--such were the principal halting-places of this tour.

The 22d of April Livingstone left that station, formerly a rich one, descended as far as the delta of the river, and arrived at Quilimane, at its mouth, on the 20th of May, four years after leaving the Cape. On the 12th of July he embarked for Maurice, and on the 22d of December he was returning to England, after sixteen years' absence.

The prize of the Geographical Society of Paris, the grand medal of the London Geographical Society, and brilliant receptions greeted the illustrious traveler. Another would, perhaps, have thought that repose was well earned. The doctor did not think so, and departed on the 1st of March, 1858, accompanied by his brother Charles, Captain Bedinfield, the Drs. Kirk and Meller, and by Messrs. Thornton and Baines. He arrived in May on the coast of Mozambique, having for an

object the exploration of the basin of the Zambezi.

All would not return from this voyage. A little steamer, the "My Robert," enabled the explorers to ascend the great river by the Rongone. They arrived at Tete, September the 8th; thence reconnoissance of the lower course of the Zambezi and of the Chire, its left branch, in January, 1859; visit to Lake Chirona in April; exploration of the Manganjas' territory; discovery of Lake Nyassa on September 10th; return to the Victoria Falls, August 9th, 1860; arrival of Bishop Mackensie and his missionaries at the mouth of the Zambezi, January 31st, 1861; the exploration of the Rovouma, on the "Pioneer," in March; the return to Lake Nyassa in September, 1861, and residence there till the end of October; January 30th, 1862, arrival of Mrs. Livingstone and a second steamer, the "Lady Nyassa:" such were the events that marked the first years of this new expedition. At this time, Bishop Mackensie and one of his missionaries had already succumbed to the unhealthfulness of the climate, and on the 27th of April, Mrs. Livingstone died in her husband's arms.

In May, the doctor attempted a second reconnoissance of the Rovouma; then, at the end of November, he entered the Zambezi again, and sailed up the Chire again. In April, 1863, he lost his companion, Thornton, sent back to Europe his brother Charles and Dr. Kirk, who were both exhausted by sickness, and November 10th, for the third time, he saw Nyassa, of which he completed the hydrography. Three months after he was again at the mouth of the Zambezi, passed to Zanzibar, and July 20th, 1864, after five years' absence, he arrived in London, where

he published his work entitled: "Exploration of the Zambezi and its Branches."

January 28th, 1866, Livingstone landed again at Zanzibar. He was beginning his fourth voyage.

August 8th, after having witnessed the horrible scenes provoked by the slave-trade in that country, the doctor, taking this time only a few cipayes and a few negroes, found himself again at Mokalaose, on the banks of the Nyassa. Six weeks later, the majority of the men forming the escort took flight, returned to Zanzibar, and there falsely spread the report of Livingstone's death.

He, however, did not draw back. He wished to visit the country comprised between the Nyassa and Lake Tanganyika. December 10th, guided by some natives, he traversed the Loangona River, and April 2d, 1867, he discovered Lake Liemmba. There he remained a month between life and death. Hardly well again August 30th he reached Lake Moero, of which he visited the northern shore, and November 21st he entered the town of Cayembe, where he lived forty days, during which he twice renewed his exploration of Lake Moero.

From Cayembe Livingstone took a northern direction, with the design of reaching the important town of Oujiji, on the Tanganyika. Surprised by the rising of the waters, and abandoned by his guides, he was obliged to return to Cayembe. He redescended to the south June 6th, and six weeks after gained the great lake Bangoneolo. He remained there till

August 9th, and then sought to reascend toward Lake Tanganyika.

What a journey! On setting out, January 7th, 1869, the heroic doctor's feebleness was such that be had to be carried. In February he at last reached the lake and arrived at Oujiji, where he found some articles sent to his address by the Oriental Company of Calcutta.

Livingstone then had but one idea, to gain the sources of the valley of the Nile by ascending the Tanganyika. September 21st he was at Bambarre, in the Manonyema, a cannibal country, and arrived at the Loualaba--that Loualaba that Cameron was going to suspect, and Stanley to discover, to be only the upper Zaire, or Congo. At Mamohela the doctor was sick for eighty days. He had only three servants. July 21st, 1871, he departed again for the Tanganyika, and only reentered Oujiji October 23d. He was then a mere skeleton.

Meanwhile, before this period, people had been a long time without news of the traveler. In Europe they believed him to be dead. He himself had almost lost hope of being ever relieved.

Eleven days after his entrance into Oujiji shots were heard a quarter of a mile from the lake. The doctor arrives. A man, a white man, is before him. "Doctor Livingstone, I presume?"

"Yes," replied the latter, raising his cap, with a friendly smile.

Their hands were warmly clasped.

"I thank God," continued the white man, "that He has permitted me to meet you."

"I am happy," said Livingstone, "to be here to receive you."

The white man was the American Stanley, a reporter of the New York Herald, whom Mr. Bennett, the proprietor of that journal, had just sent to find David Livingstone.

In the month of October, 1870, this American, without hesitation, without a word, simply as a hero, had embarked at Bombay for Zanzibar, and almost following Speke and Burton's route, after untold sufferings, his life being menaced several times, he arrived at Oujiji.

The two travelers, now become fast friends, then made an expedition to the north of Lake Tanganyika. They embarked, pushed as far as Cape Malaya, and after a minute exploration, were of the opinion that the great lake had for an outlet a branch of the Loualaba.

It was what Cameron and Stanley himself were going to determine positively some years after. December 12th, Livingstone and his companion were returning to Oujiji.

Stanley prepared to depart. December 27th, after a navigation of eight days, the doctor and he arrived at Ousimba; then, February 23d, they

entered Kouihara.

March 12th was the day of parting.

"You have accomplished," said the doctor to his companion, "what few men would have done, and done it much better than certain great travelers. I am very grateful to you for it. May God lead you, my friend, and may He bless you!"

"May He," said Stanley, taking Livingstone's hand, "bring you back to us safe and sound, dear doctor!"

Stanley drew back quickly from this embrace, and turned so as to conceal his tears. "Good-by, doctor, dear friend," he said in a stifled voice.

"Good-by," replied Livingstone, feebly.

Stanley departed, and July 12th, 1872, he landed at Marseilles.

Livingstone was going to return to his discoveries. August 25th, after five months passed at Konihara, accompanied by his black servants, Souzi, Chouma, and Amoda, by two other servants, by Jacob Wainwright, and by fifty-six men sent by Stanley, he went toward the south of the Tanganyika.

A month after, the caravan arrived at M'oura, in the midst of storms,

caused by an extreme drought. Then came the rains, the bad will of the natives, and the loss of the beasts of burden, from falling under the stings of the tsetse. January 24th, 1873, the little troop was at Tchitounkone. April 27th, after having left Lake Bangoneolo to the east, the troop was going toward the village of Tchitambo.

At that place some traders had left Livingstone. This is what Alvez and his colleague had learned from them. They had good reason to believe that the doctor, after exploring the south of the lake, would venture across the Loanda, and come to seek unknown countries in the west. Thence he was to ascend toward Angola, to visit those regions infested by the slave-trade, to push as far as Kazounde; the tour seemed to be all marked out, and it was very probable that Livingstone would follow it.

Mrs. Weldon then could count on the approaching arrival of the great traveler, because, in the beginning of June, it was already more than two months since he had reached the south of Lake Bangoneolo.

Now, June 13th, the day before that on which Negoro would come to claim from Mrs. Weldon the letter that would put one hundred thousand dollars in his hands, sad news was spread, at which Alvez and the traders only rejoiced.

May 1st, 1873, at dawn, Dr. David Livingstone died. In fact, on April 29th, the little caravan had reached the village of Tchitambo, to the south of the lake. The doctor was carried there on a litter. On the

30th, in the night, under the influence of excessive grief, he moaned out this complaint, that was hardly heard: "Oh, dear! dear!" and he fell back from drowsiness.

At the end of an hour he called his servant, Souzi, asking for some medicine, then murmuring in a feeble voice: "It is well. Now you can go."

Toward four o'clock in the morning, Souzi and five men of the escort entered the doctor's hut. David Livingstone, kneeling near his bed, his head resting on his hands, seemed to be engaged in prayer. Souzi gently touched his cheek; it was cold. David Livingstone was no more.

Nine months after, his body, carried by faithful servants at the price of unheard-of fatigues, arrived at Zanzibar. On April 12th, 1874, it was buried in Westminster Abbey, among those of her great men, whom England honors equally with her kings.

CHAPTER XV.

WHERE A MANTICORE MAY LEAD.

To what plank of safety will not an unfortunate being cling? Will not the eyes of the condemned seek to seize any ray of hope, no matter how vague?

So it had been with Mrs. Weldon. One can understand what she must have felt when she learned, from Alvez himself, that Dr. Livingstone had just died in a little Bangoneolo village.

It seemed to her that she was more isolated than ever; that a sort of bond that attached her to the traveler, and with him to the civilized world, had just been broken.

The plank of safety sank under her hand, the ray of hope went out before her eyes. Tom and his companions had left Kazounde for the lake region. Not the least news of Hercules. Mrs. Weldon was not sure of any one. She must then fall back on Negoro's proposition, while trying to amend it and secure a definite result from it.

June 14th, the day fixed by him, Negoro presented himself at Mrs. Weldon's hut.

The Portuguese was, as always, so he said, perfectly practical.

However, he abated nothing from the amount of the ransom, which his prisoner did not even discuss. But Mrs. Weldon also showed herself very practical in saying to him:

"If you wish to make an agreement, do not render it impossible by unacceptable conditions. The exchange of our liberty for the sum you exact may take place, without my husband coming into a country where you see what can be done with a white man! Now, I do not wish him to come here at any price!"

After some hesitation Negoro yielded, and Mrs. Weldon finished with the concession that James Weldon should not venture as far as Kazounde. A ship would land him at Mossamedes, a little port to the south of Angola, ordinarily frequented by slave-ships, and well-known by Negoro. It was there that the Portuguese would conduct James W. Weldon; and at a certain time Alvez's agent would bring thither Mrs. Weldon, Jack, and Cousin Benedict. The ransom would be given to those agents on the giving up of the prisoners, and Negoro, who would play the part of a perfectly honest man with James Weldon, would disappear on the ship's arrival.

Mrs. Weldon had gained a very important point. She spared her husband the dangers of a voyage to Kazounde, the risk of being kept there, after paying the exacted ransom, and the perils of the return. As to the six hundred miles that separated Kazounde from Mossamedes, by going over them as she had traveled on leaving the Coanza, Mrs. Weldon would only have a little fatigue to fear. Besides, it would be to

Alvez's interest--for he was in the affair--for the prisoners to arrive safe and sound.

The conditions being thus settled, Mrs. Weldon wrote to her husband, leaving to Negoro the care of passing himself off as a devoted servant, who had escaped from the natives. Negoro took the letter, which did not allow James Weldon to hesitate about following him as far as Mossamedes, and, the next day, escorted by twenty blacks, he traveled toward the north.

Why did he take that direction? Was it, then, Negoro's intention to embark on one of the vessels which frequent the mouths of the Congo, and thus avoid the Portuguese stations, as well as the penitentiaries in which he had been an involuntary guest? It was probable. At least, that was the reason he gave Alvez.

After his departure, Mrs. Weldon must try to arrange her existence in such a manner as to pass the time of her sojourn at Kazounde as happily as possible. Under the most favorable circumstances, it would last three or four months. Negoro's going and returning would require at least that time.

Mrs. Weldon's intention was, not to leave the factory. Her child, Cousin Benedict, and she, were comparatively safe there. Halima's good care softened the severity of this sequestration a little. Besides, it was probable that the trader would not permit her to leave the establishment. The great premium that the prisoner's ransom would

procure him, made it well worth while to guard her carefully.

It was even fortunate that Alvez was not obliged to leave Kazounde to visit his two other factories of Bihe and Cassange. Coimbra was going to take his place in the expedition on new razzias or raids. There was no motive for regretting the presence of that drunkard. Above all, Negoro, before setting out, had given Alvez the most urgent commands in regard to Mrs. Weldon. It was necessary to watch her closely. They did not know what had become of Hercules. If he had not perished in that dreadful province of Kazounde, perhaps he would attempt to get near the prisoner and snatch her from Alvez's hands. The trader perfectly understood a situation which ciphered itself out by a good number of dollars. He would answer for Mrs. Weldon as for his own body.

So the monotonous life of the prisoner during the first days after her arrival at the factory, was continued. What passed in this enclosure reproduced very exactly the various acts of native existence outside. Alvez lived like the other natives of Kazounde. The women of the establishment worked as they would have done in the town, for the greater comfort of their husbands or their masters. Their occupations included preparing rice with heavy blows of the pestle in wooden mortars, to perfect decortication; cleansing and winnowing maize, and all the manipulations necessary to draw from it a granulous substance which serves to compose that potage called "mtyelle" in the country; the harvesting of the sorgho, a kind of large millet, the ripening of which had just been solemnly celebrated at this time; the

extraction of that fragrant oil from the "mpafon" drupes, kinds of olives, the essence of which forms a perfume sought for by the natives; spinning of the cotton, the fibers of which are twisted by means of a spindle a foot and a half long, to which the spinners impart a rapid rotation; the fabrication of bark stuffs with the mallet; the extraction from the tapioca roots, and the preparation of the earth for the different products of the country, cassava, flour that they make from the manioc beans, of which the pods, fifteen inches long, named "mositsanes," grow on trees twenty feet high; arachides intended to make oil, perennial peas of a bright blue, known under the name of "tchilobes," the flowers of which relieve the slightly insipid taste of the milk of sorgho; native coffee, sugar canes, the juice of which is reduced to a syrup; onions, Indian pears, sesamum, cucumbers, the seeds of which are roasted like chestnuts; the preparation of fermented drinks, the "malofori," made with bananas, the "pombe" and other liquors; the care of the domestic animals, of those cows that only allow themselves to be milked in the presence of their little one or of a stuffed calf; of those heifers of small race, with short horns, some of which have a hump; of those goats which, in the country where their flesh serves for food, are an important object of exchange, one might say current money like the slave; finally, the feeding of the birds, swine, sheep, oxen, and so forth.

This long enumeration shows what rude labors fall on the feeble sex in those savage regions of the African continent.

During this time the men smoke tobacco or hemp, chase the elephant or

the buffalo, and hire themselves to the traders for the raids. The harvest of maize or of slaves is always a harvest that takes place in fixed seasons.

Of those various occupations, Mrs. Weldon only saw in Alvez's factory the part laid on the women. Sometimes she stopped, looking at them, while the slaves, it must be said, only replied to her by ugly grimaces. A race instinct led these unfortunates to hate a white woman, and they had no commiseration for her in their hearts. Halima alone was an exception, and Mrs. Weldon, having learned certain words of the native language, was soon able to exchange a few sentences with the young slave.

Little Jack often accompanied his mother when she walked in the inclosure; but he wished very much to go outside. There was, however, in an enormous baobab, marabout nests, formed of a few sticks, and "souimangas" nests, birds with scarlet breasts and throats, which resemble those of the tissirms; then "widows," that strip the thatch for the benefit of their family; "calaos," whose song was agreeable, bright gray parrots with red tails, which, in the Manyema, are called "rouss," and give their name to the chiefs of the tribes; insectivorous "drougos," similar to gray linnets, with large, red beaks. Here and there also fluttered hundreds of butterflies of different species, especially in the neighborhood of the brooks that crossed the factory; but that was rather Cousin Benedict's affair than little Jack's, and the latter regretted greatly not being taller, so as to look over the walls. Alas! where was his poor friend, Dick

Sand--he who had brought him so high up in the "Pilgrim's" masts? How he would have followed him on the branches of those trees, whose tops rose to more than a hundred feet! What good times they would have had together!

Cousin Benedict always found himself very well where he was, provided insects were not lacking. Happily, he had discovered in the factory--and he studied as much as he could without magnifying glass or spectacles--a small bee which forms its cells among the worm-holes of the wood, and a "sphex" that lays its eggs in cells that are not its own, as the cuckoo in the nests of other birds. Mosquitoes were not lacking either, on the banks of the rivulets, and they tattooed him with bites to the extent of making him unrecognizable. And when Mrs. Weldon reproached him with letting himself be thus devoured by those venomous insects: "It is their instinct, Cousin Weldon," he replied to her, scratching himself till the blood came; "it is their instinct, and we must not have a grudge against them!"

At last, one day--it was the 17th of June--Cousin Benedict was on the point of being the happiest of entomologists. But this adventure, which had unexpected consequences, needs to be related with some minuteness.

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning. An overpowering heat had obliged the inhabitants of the factory to keep in their huts, and one would not even meet a single native in the streets of Kazounde.

Mrs. Weldon was dozing near little Jack, who was sleeping soundly. Cousin Benedict, himself, suffering from the influence of this tropical temperature, had given up his favorite hunts, which was a great sacrifice for him, for, in those rays of the midday sun, he heard the rustle of a whole world of insects. He was sheltered, then, at the end of his hut, and there, sleep began to take possession of him in this involuntary siesta.

Suddenly, as his eyes half closed, he heard a humming; this is one of those insupportable buzzings of insects, some of which can give fifteen or sixteen thousand beats of their wings in a second.

"A hexapode!" exclaimed Cousin Benedict, awakened at once, and passing from the horizontal to the vertical position.

There was no doubt that it was a hexapode that was buzzing in his hut. But, if Cousin Benedict was very near-sighted, he had at least very acute hearing, so acute even that he could recognize one insect from another by the intensity of its buzz, and it seemed to him that this one was unknown, though it could only be produced by a giant of the species.

"What is this hexapode?" Cousin Benedict asked himself.

Behold him, seeking to perceive the insect, which was very difficult to his eyes without glasses, but trying above all to recognize it by the buzzing of its wings.

His instinct as an entomologist warned him that he had something to accomplish, and that the insect, so providentially entered into his hut, ought not to be the first comer.

Cousin Benedict no longer moved. He listened. A few rays of light reached him. His eyes then discovered a large black point that flew about, but did not pass near enough for him to recognize it. He held his breath, and if he felt himself stung in some part of the face or hands, he was determined not to make a single movement that might put his hexapode to flight. At last the buzzing insect, after turning around him for a long time, came to rest on his head. Cousin Benedict's mouth widened for an instant, as if to give a smile--and what a smile! He felt the light animal running on his hair. An irresistible desire to put his hand there seized him for a moment; but he resisted it, and did well.

"No, no!" thought he, "I would miss it, or what would be worse, I would injure it. Let it come more within my reach. See it walking! It descends. I feel its dear little feet running on my skull! This must be a hexapode of great height. My God! only grant that it may descend on the end of my nose, and there, by squinting a little, I might perhaps see it, and determine to what order, genus, species, or variety it belongs."

So thought Cousin Benedict. But it was a long distance from his skull, which was rather pointed, to the end of his nose, which was very long.

How many other roads the capricious insect might take, beside his ears, beside his forehead--roads that would take it to a distance from the savant's eyes--without counting that at any moment it might retake its flight, leave the hut, and lose itself in those solar rays where, doubtless, its life was passed, and in the midst of the buzzing of its congeners that would attract it outside!

Cousin Benedict said all that to himself. Never, in all his life as an entomologist, had he passed more touching minutes. An African hexapode, of a new species, or, at least, of a new variety, or even of a new sub-variety, was there on his head, and he could not recognize it except it deigned to walk at least an inch from his eyes.

However, Cousin Benedict's prayer must be heard. The insect, after having traveled over the half-bald head, as on the summit of some wild bush, began to descend Cousin Benedict's forehead, and the latter might at last conceive the hope that it would venture to the top of his nose. Once arrived at that top, why would it not descend to the base?

"In its place, I--I would descend," thought the worthy savant.

What is truer than that, in Cousin Benedict's place, any other would have struck his forehead violently, so as to crush the enticing insect, or at least to put it to flight. To feel six feet moving on his skin, without speaking of the fear of being bitten, and not make a gesture, one will agree that it was the height of heroism. The Spartan

allowing his breast to be devoured by a fox; the Roman holding burning coals between his fingers, were not more masters of themselves than Cousin Benedict, who was undoubtedly descended from those two heroes.

After twenty little circuits, the insect arrived at the top of the nose. Then there was a moment's hesitation that made all Cousin Benedict's blood rush to his heart. Would the hexapode ascend again beyond the line of the eyes, or would it descend below?

It descended. Cousin Benedict felt its caterpillar feet coming toward the base of his nose. The insect turned neither to the right nor to the left. It rested between its two buzzing wings, on the slightly hooked edge of that learned nose, so well formed to carry spectacles. It cleared the little furrow produced by the incessant use of that optical instrument, so much missed by the poor cousin, and it stopped just at the extremity of his nasal appendage.

It was the best place this haxapode could choose. At that distance, Cousin Benedict's two eyes, by making their visual rays converge, could, like two lens, dart their double look on the insect.

"Almighty God!" exclaimed Cousin Benedict, who could not repress a cry, "the tuberculous manticore."

Now, he must not cry it out, he must only think it. But was it not too much to ask from the most enthusiastic of entomologists?

To have on the end of his nose a tuberculous manticore, with large elytrums--an insect of the cicendeletes tribe--a very rare specimen in collections--one that seems peculiar to those southern parts of Africa, and yet not utter a cry of admiration; that is beyond human strength.

Unfortunately the manticore heard this cry, which was almost immediately followed by a sneeze, that shook the appendage on which it rested. Cousin Benedict wished to take possession of it, extended his hand, shut it violently, and only succeeded in seizing the end of his own nose.

"Malediction!" exclaimed he. But then he showed a remarkable coolness.

He knew that the tuberculous manticore only flutters about, so to say, that it walks rather than flies. He then knelt, and succeeded in perceiving, at less than ten inches from his eyes, the black point that was gliding rapidly in a ray of light.

Evidently it was better to study it in this independent attitude. Only he must not lose sight of it.

"To seize the manticore would be to risk crushing it," Cousin Benedict said to himself. "No; I shall follow it! I shall admire it! I have time enough to take it!"

Was Cousin Benedict wrong? However that may be, see him now on all

fours, his nose to the ground like a dog that smells a scent, and following seven or eight inches behind the superb hexapode. One moment after he was outside his hut, under the midday sun, and a few minutes later at the foot of the palisade that shut in Alvez's establishment.

At this place was the manticore going to clear the enclosure with a bound, and put a wall between its adorer and itself? No, that was not in its nature, and Cousin Benedict knew it well. So he was always there, crawling like a snake, too far off to recognize the insect entomologically--besides, that was done--but near enough to perceive that large, moving point traveling over the ground.

The manticore, arrived near the palisade, had met the large entrance of a mole-hill that opened at the foot of the enclosure. There, without hesitating, it entered this subterranean gallery, for it is in the habit of seeking those obscure passages. Cousin Benedict believed that he was going to lose sight of it. But, to his great surprise, the passage was at least two feet high, and the mole-hill formed a gallery where his long, thin body could enter. Besides, he put the ardor of a ferret into his pursuit, and did not even perceive that in "earthing" himself thus, he was passing outside the palisade.

In fact, the mole-hill established a natural communication between the inside and the outside. In half a minute Cousin Benedict was outside of the factory. That did not trouble him. He was absorbed in admiration of the elegant insect that was leading him on. But the latter, doubtless, had enough of this long walk. Its elytrums turned

aside, its wings spread out. Cousin Benedict felt the danger, and, with his curved hand, he was going to make a provisional prison for the manticore, when--f-r-r-r-r!--it flew away!

What despair! But the manticore could not go far. Cousin Benedict rose; he looked, he darted forward, his two hands stretched out and open. The insect flew above his head, and he only perceived a large black point, without appreciable form to him.

Would the manticore come to the ground again to rest, after having traced a few capricious circles around Cousin Benedict's bald head? All the probabilities were in favor of its doing so.

Unfortunately for the unhappy savant, this part of Alvez's establishment, which was situated at the northern extremity of the town, bordered on a vast forest, which covered the territory of Kazounde for a space of several square miles. If the manticore gained the cover of the trees, and if there, it should flutter from branch to branch, he must renounce all hope of making it figure in that famous tin box, in which it would be the most precious jewel.

Alas! that was what happened. The manticore had rested again on the ground. Cousin Benedict, having the unexpected hope of seeing it again, threw himself on the ground at once. But the manticore no longer walked: it proceeded by little jumps.

Cousin Benedict, exhausted, his knees and hands bleeding, jumped also.

His two arms, his hands open, were extended to the right, to the left, according as the black point bounded here or there. It might be said that he was drawing his body over that burning soil, as a swimmer does on the surface of the water.

Useless trouble! His two hands always closed on nothing. The insect escaped him while playing with him, and soon, arrived under the fresh branches, it arose, after throwing into Cousin Benedict's ear, which it touched lightly, the most intense but also the most ironical buzzing of its coleopter wings.

"Malediction!" exclaimed Cousin Benedict, a second time. "It escapes me. Ungrateful hexapode! Thou to whom I reserved a place of honor in my collection! Well, no, I shall not give thee up! I shall follow thee till I reach thee!"

He forgot, this discomfited cousin, that his nearsighted eyes would not enable him to perceive the manticore among the foliage. But he was no longer master of himself. Vexation, anger, made him a fool. It was himself, and only himself, that he must blame for his loss. If he had taken possession of the insect at first, instead of following it "in its independent ways," nothing of all that would have happened, and he would possess that admirable specimen of African manticores, the name of which is that of a fabulous animal, having a man's head and a lion's body.

Cousin Benedict had lost his head. He little thought that the most

unforeseen of circumstances had just restored him to liberty. He did not dream that the ant-hill, into which he had just entered, had opened to him an escape, and that he had just left Alvez's establishment. The forest was there, and under the trees was his manticore, flying away! At any price, he wanted to see it again.

See him, then, running across the thick forest, no longer conscious even of what he was doing, always imagining he saw the precious insect, beating the air with his long arms like a gigantic field-spider. Where he was going, how he would return, and if he should return, he did not even ask himself, and for a good mile he made his way thus, at the risk of being met by some native, or attacked by some beast.

Suddenly, as he passed near a thicket, a gigantic being sprang out and threw himself on him. Then, as Cousin Benedict would have done with the manticore, that being seized him with one hand by the nape of the neck, with the other by the lower part of the back, and before he had time to know what was happening, he was carried across the forest.

Truly, Cousin Benedict had that day lost a fine occasion of being able to proclaim himself the happiest entomologist of the five parts of the world.

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CHAPTER XVI.

A MAGICIAN.

When Mrs. Weldon, on the 17th of the month, did not see Cousin Benedict reappear at the accustomed hour, she was seized with the greatest uneasiness. She could not imagine what had become of her big baby. That he had succeeded in escaping from the factory, the enclosure of which was absolutely impassable, was not admissible. Besides, Mrs. Weldon knew her cousin. Had one proposed to this original to flee, abandoning his tin box and his collection of African insects, he would have refused without the shadow of hesitation. Now, the box was there in the hut, intact, containing all that the savant had been able to collect since his arrival on the continent. To suppose that he was voluntarily separated from his entomological treasures, was inadmissible.

Nevertheless, Cousin Benedict was no longer in Jose-Antonio Alvez's establishment.

During all that day Mrs. Weldon looked for him persistently. Little Jack and the slave Halima joined her. It was useless.

Mrs. Weldon was then forced to adopt this sad hypothesis: the prisoner had been carried away by the trader's orders, for motives that she could not fathom. But then, what had Alvez done with him? Had he

incarcerated him in one of the barracks of the large square? Why this carrying away, coming after the agreement made between Mrs. Weldon and Negoro, an agreement which included Cousin Benedict in the number of the prisoners whom the trader would conduct to Mossamedes, to be placed in James W. Weldon's hands for a ransom?

If Mrs. Weldon had been a witness of Alvez's anger, when the latter learned of the prisoner's disappearance, she would have understood that this disappearance was indeed made against his will. But then, if Cousin Benedict had escaped voluntarily, why had he not let her into the secret of his escape?

However, the search of Alvez and his servants, which was made with the greatest care, led to the discovery of that mole-hill, which put the factory in direct communication with the neighboring forest. The trader no longer doubted that the "fly-hunter" had fled by that narrow opening. One may then judge of his fury, when he said to himself that this flight would doubtless be put to account, and would diminish the prize that the affair would bring him.

"That imbecile is not worth much," thought he, "nevertheless, I shall be compelled to pay dear for him. Ah! if I take him again!"

But notwithstanding the searchings that were made inside, and though the woods were beaten over a large radius, it was impossible to find any trace of the fugitive.

Mrs. Weldon must resign herself to the loss of her cousin, and Alvez mourn over his prisoner. As it could not be admitted that the latter had established communications with the outside, it appeared evident that chance alone had made him discover the existence of the mole-hill, and that he had taken flight without thinking any more of those he left behind than if they had never existed.

Mrs. Weldon was forced to allow that it must be so, but she did not dream of blaming the poor man, so perfectly unconscious of his actions.

"The unfortunate! what will become of him?" she asked herself.

It is needless to say that the mole-hill had been closed up the same day, and with the greatest care, and that the watch was doubled inside as well as outside the factory.

The monotonous life of the prisoners then continued for Mrs. Weldon and her child.

Meanwhile, a climatic fact, very rare at that period of the year, was produced in the province. Persistent rains began about the 19th of June, though the masika period, that finishes in April, was passed. In fact, the sky was covered, and continual showers inundated the territory of Kazounde.

What was only a vexation for Mrs. Weldon, because she must renounce

her walks inside the factory, became a public misfortune for the natives. The low lands, covered with harvests already ripe, were entirely submerged. The inhabitants of the province, to whom the crop suddenly failed, soon found themselves in distress. All the labors of the season were compromised, and Queen Moini, any more than her ministers, did not know how to face the catastrophe.

They then had recourse to the magicians, but not to those whose profession is to heal the sick by their incantations and sorceries, or who predict success to the natives. There was a public misfortune on hand, and the best "mganngas," who have the privilege of provoking or stopping the rains, were prayed to, to conjure away the peril.

Their labor was in vain. It was in vain that they intoned their monotonous chant, rang their little bells and hand-bells, employed their most precious amulets, and more particularly, a horn full of mud and bark, the point of which was terminated by three little horns. The spirits were exorcised by throwing little balls of dung, or in spitting in the faces of the most august personages of the court; but they did not succeed in chasing away the bad spirits that presided over the formation of the clouds.

Now, things were going from bad to worse, when Queen Moini thought of inviting a celebrated magician, then in the north of Angola. He was a magician of the first order, whose power was the more marvelous because they had never tested it in this country where he had never come. But there was no question of its success among the Masikas.

It was on the 25th of June, in the morning, that the new magician suddenly announced his arrival at Kazounde with great ringing of bells.

This sorcerer came straight to the "tchitoka," and immediately the crowd of natives rushed toward him. The sky was a little less rainy, the wind indicated a tendency to change, and those signs of calm, coinciding with the arrival of the magician, predisposed the minds of the natives in his favor.

Besides, he was a superb man--a black of the finest water. He was at least six feet high, and must be extraordinarily strong. This prestige already influenced the crowd.

Generally, the sorcerers were in bands of three, four, or five when they went through the villages, and a certain number of acolytes, or companions, made their cortege. This magician was alone. His whole breast was zebraed with white marks, done with pipe clay. The lower part of his body disappeared under an ample skirt of grass stuff, the "train" of which would not have disgraced a modern elegant. A collar of birds' skulls was round his neck; on his head was a sort of leathern helmet, with plumes ornamented with pearls; around his loins a copper belt, to which hung several hundred bells, noisier than the sonorous harness of a Spanish mule: thus this magnificent specimen of the corporation of native wizards was dressed.

All the material of his art was comprised in a kind of basket, of which a calebash formed the bottom, and which was filled with shells, amulets, little wooden idols, and other fetiches, plus a notable quantity of dung balls, important accessories to the incantations and divinatory practises of the center of Africa.

One peculiarity was soon discovered by the crowd. This magician was dumb. But this infirmity could only increase the consideration with which they were disposed to surround him. He only made a guttural sound, low and languid, which had no signification. The more reason for being well skilled in the mysteries of witchcraft.

The magician first made the tour of the great place, executing a kind of dance which put in motion all his chime of bells. The crowd followed, imitating his movements--it might be said, as a troop of monkeys following a gigantic, four-handed animal. Then, suddenly, the sorcerer, treading the principal street of Kazounde, went toward the royal residence.

As soon as Queen Moini had been informed of the arrival of the new wizard, she appeared, followed by her courtiers.

The magician bowed to the ground, and lifted up his head again, showing his superb height. His arms were then extended toward the sky, which was rapidly furrowed by masses of clouds. The sorcerer pointed to those clouds with his hand; he imitated their movements in an animated pantomime. He showed them fleeing to the west, but returning

to the east by a rotary movement that no power could stop.

Then, suddenly, to the great surprise of the town and the court, this sorcerer took the redoubtable sovereign of Kazounde by the hand. A few courtiers wished to oppose this act, which was contrary to all etiquette; but the strong magician, seizing the nearest by the nape of the neck, sent him staggering fifteen paces off.

The queen did not appear to disapprove of this proud manner of acting. A sort of grimace, which ought to be a smile, was addressed to the wizard, who drew the queen on with rapid steps, while the crowd rushed after him.

This time it was toward Alvez's establishment that the sorcerer directed his steps. He soon reached the door, which was shut. A simple blow from his shoulder threw it to the ground, and he led the conquered queen into the interior of the factory.

The trader, his soldiers and his slaves, ran to punish the daring being who took it upon himself to throw down doors without waiting for them to be opened to him. Suddenly, seeing that their sovereign did not protest, they stood still, in a respectful attitude.

No doubt Alvez was about to ask the queen why he was honored by her visit, but the magician did not give him time. Making the crowd recede so as to leave a large space free around him, he recommenced his pantomime with still greater animation. He pointed to the clouds, he

threatened them, he exorcised them; he made a sign as if he could first stop them, and then scatter them. His enormous cheeks were puffed out, and he blew on this mass of heavy vapors as if he had the strength to disperse them. Then, standing upright, he seemed to intend stopping them in their course, and one would have said that, owing to his gigantic height, he could have seized them.

The superstitious Moini, "overcome" by the acting of this tall comedian, could no longer control herself. Cries escaped her. She raved in her turn, and instinctively repeated the magician's gestures. The courtiers and the crowd followed her example, and the mute's guttural sounds were lost amid those songs; cries, and yells which the native language furnishes with so much prodigality.

Did the clouds cease to rise on the eastern horizon and veil the tropical sun? Did they vanish before the exorcisms of this new wizard? No. And just at this moment, when the queen and her people imagined that they had appeased the evil spirits that had watered them with so many showers, the sky, somewhat clear since daybreak, became darker than ever. Large drops of rain fell pattering on the ground.

Then a sudden change took place in the crowd. They then saw that this sorcerer was worth no more than the others. The queen's brows were frowning. They understood that he at least was in danger of losing his ears. The natives had contracted the circle around him; fists threatened him, and they were about to punish him, when an unforeseen incident changed the object of their evil intentions.

The magician, who overlooked the whole yelling crowd, stretched his arms toward one spot in the enclosure. The gesture was so imperious that all turned to look at it.

Mrs. Weldon and little Jack, attracted by the noise and the clamor, had just left their hut. The magician, with an angry gesture, had pointed to them with his left hand, while his right was raised toward the sky.

They! it was they'! It was this white woman--it was her child--they were causing all this evil. They had brought these clouds from their rainy country, to inundate the territories of Kazounde.

It was at once understood. Queen Moini, pointing to Mrs. Weldon, made a threatening gesture. The natives, uttering still more terrible cries, rushed toward her.

Mrs. Weldon thought herself lost, and clasping her son in her arms, she stood motionless as a statue before this over-excited crowd.

The magician went toward her. The natives stood aside in the presence of this wizard, who, with the cause of the evil, seemed to have found the remedy.

The trader, Alvez, knowing that the life of the prisoner was precious, now approached, not being sure of what he ought to do.

The magician had seized little Jack, and snatching him from his mother's arms, he held him toward the sky. It seemed as if he were about to dash the child to the earth, so as to appease the gods.

With a terrible cry, Mrs. Weldon fell to the ground insensible.

But the magician, after having made a sign to the queen, which no doubt reassured her as to his intentions, raised the unhappy mother, and while the crowd, completely subdued, parted to give him space, he carried her away with her child.

Alvez was furious, not expecting this result. After having lost one of the three prisoners, to see the prize confided to his care thus escape, and, with the prize, the large bribe promised him by Negoro! Never! not if the whole territory of Kazounde were submerged by a new deluge! He tried to oppose this abduction.

The natives now began to mutter against him. The queen had him seized by her guards, and, knowing what it might cost him, the trader was forced to keep quiet, while cursing the stupid credulity of Queen Moini's subjects.

The savages, in fact, expected to see the clouds disappear with those who had brought them, and they did not doubt that the magician would destroy the scourge, from which they suffered so much, in the blood of the strangers.

Meanwhile, the magician carried off his victims as a lion would a couple of kids which did not satisfy his powerful appetite. Little Jack was terrified, his mother was unconscious. The crowd, roused to the highest degree of fury, escorted the magician with yells; but he left the enclosure, crossed Kazounde, and reentered the forest, walking nearly three miles, without resting for a moment. Finally he was alone, the natives having understood that he did not wish to be followed. He arrived at the bank of a river, whose rapid current flowed toward the north.

There, at the end of a large opening, behind the long, drooping branches of a thicket which hid the steep bank, was moored a canoe, covered by a sort of thatch.

The magician lowered his double burden into the boat, and following himself, shoved out from the bank, and the current rapidly carried them down the stream. The next minute he said, in a very distinct voice:

"Captain, here are Mrs. Weldon and little Jack; I present them to you. Forward. And may all the clouds in heaven fall on those idiots of Kazounde!"

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CHAPTER XVII.

DRIFTING.

It was Hercules, not easily recognized in his magician's attire, who was speaking thus, and it was Dick Sand whom he was addressing--Dick Sand, still feeble enough, to lean on Cousin Benedict, near whom Dingo was lying.

Mrs. Weldon, who had regained consciousness, could only pronounce these words:

"You! Dick! You!"

The young novice rose, but already Mrs. Weldon was pressing him in her arms, and Jack was lavishing caresses on him.

"My friend Dick! my friend Dick!" repeated the little boy. Then, turning to Hercules: "And I," he added, "I did not know you!"

"Hey! what a disguise!" replied Hercules, rubbing his breast to efface the variety of colors that striped it.

"You were too ugly!" said little Jack.

"Bless me! I was the devil, and the devil is not handsome."

"Hercules!" said Mrs. Weldon, holding out her hand to the brave black.

"He has delivered you," added Dick Sand, "as he has saved me, though he will not allow it."

"Saved! saved! We are not saved yet!" replied Hercules. "And besides, without Mr. Benedict, who came to tell us where you were, Mrs. Weldon, we could not have done anything."

In fact, it was Hercules who, five days before, had jumped upon the savant at the moment when, having been led two miles from the factory, the latter was running in pursuit of his precious manticore. Without this incident, neither Dick Sand nor the black would have known Mrs. Weldon's retreat, and Hercules would not have ventured to Kazounde in a magician's dress.

While the boat drifted with rapidity in this narrow part of the river, Hercules related what had passed since his flight from the camp on the Coanza; how, without being seen, he had followed the kitanda in which Mrs. Weldon and her son were; how he had found Dingo wounded; how the two had arrived in the neighborhood of Kazounde; how a note from Hercules, carried by the dog, told Dick Sand what had become of Mrs. Weldon; how, after the unexpected arrival of Cousin Benedict, he had vainly tried to make his way into the factory, more carefully guarded than ever; how, at last, he had found this opportunity of snatching the prisoner from that horrible Jose-Antonio Alvez. Now,

this opportunity had offered itself that same day. A mgannga, or magician, on his witchcraft circuit, that celebrated magician so impatiently expected, was passing through the forest in which Hercules roamed every night, watching, waiting, ready for anything.

To spring upon the magician, despoil him of his baggage, and of his magician's vestments, to fasten him to the foot of a tree with liane knots that the Davenports themselves could not have untied, to paint his body, taking the sorcerer's for a model, and to act out his character in charming and controlling the rains, had been the work of several hours. Still, the incredible credulity of the natives was necessary for his success.

During this recital, given rapidly by Hercules, nothing concerning Dick Sand had been mentioned.

"And you, Dick!" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"I, Mrs. Weldon!" replied the young man. "I can tell you nothing. My last thought was for you, for Jack! I tried in vain to break the cords that fastened me to the stake. The water rose over my head. I lost consciousness. When I came to myself, I was sheltered in a hole, concealed by the papyrus of this bank, and Hercules was on his knees beside me, lavishing his care upon me."

"Well! that is because I am a physician," replied Hercules; "a diviner, a sorcerer, a magician, a fortuneteller!"

"Hercules," said Mrs. Weldon, "tell me, how did you save Dick Sand?"

"Did I do it, Mrs. Weldon?" replied Hercules; "Might not the current have broken the stake to which our captain was tied, and in the middle of the night, carried him half-dead on this beam, to the place where I received him? Besides, in the darkness, there was no difficulty in gliding among the victims that carpeted the ditch, waiting for the bursting of the dam, diving under water, and, with a little strength, pulling up our captain and the stake to which these scoundrels had bound him! There was nothing very extraordinary in all that! The first-comer could have done as much. Mr. Benedict himself, or even Dingo! In fact, might it not have been Dingo?"

A yelping was heard; and Jack, taking hold of the dog's large head, gave him several little friendly taps.

"Dingo," he asked, "did you save our friend Dick?"

At the same time he turned the dog's head from right to left.

"He says, no, Hercules!" said Jack. "You see that it was not he. Dingo, did Hercules save our captain?"

The little boy forced Dingo's good head to move up and down, five or six times.

"He says, yes, Hercules! he says, yes!" cried little Jack. "You see then that it was you!"

"Friend Dingo," replied Hercules, caressing the dog, "that is wrong. You promised me not to betray me."

Yes, it was indeed Hercules, who had risked his life to save Dick Sand. But he had done it, and his modesty would not allow him to agree to the fact. Besides, he thought it a very simple thing, and he repeated that any one of his companions would have done the same under the circumstances.

This led Mrs. Weldon to speak of old Tom, of his son, of Acteon and Bat, his unfortunate companions.

They had started for the lake region. Hercules had seen them pass with the caravan of slaves. He had followed them, but no opportunity to communicate with them had presented itself. They were gone! they were lost!

Hercules had been laughing heartily, but now he shed tears which he did not try to restrain.

"Do not cry, my friend," Mrs. Weldon said to him. "God may be merciful, and allow us to meet them again."

In a few words she informed Dick Sand of all that had happened during

her stay in Alvez's factory.

"Perhaps," she added, "it would have been better to have remained at Kazounde."

"What a fool I was!" cried Hercules.

"No, Hercules, no!" said Dick Sand. "These wretches would have found means to draw Mr. Weldon into some new trap. Let us flee together, and without delay. We shall reach the coast before Negoro can return to Mossamedes. There, the Portuguese authorities will give us aid and protection; and when Alvez comes to take his one hundred thousand dollars--"

"A hundred thousand blows on the old scoundrel's skull!" cried Hercules; "and I will undertake to keep the count."

However, here was a new complication, although it was very evident that Mrs. Weldon would not dream of returning to Kazounde. The point now was to anticipate Negoro. All Dick Sand's projects must tend toward that end.

Dick Sand was now putting in practise the plan which he had long contemplated, of gaining the coast by utilizing the current of a river or a stream. Now, the watercourse was there; its direction was northward, and it was possible that it emptied into the Zaire. In that case, instead of reaching St. Paul de Loanda, it would be at the mouth

of the great river that Mrs. Weldon and her companions would arrive. This was not important, because help would not fail them in the colonies of Lower Guinea.

Having decided to descend the current of this river, Dick Sand's first idea was to embark on one of the herbaceous rafts, a kind of floating isle (of which Cameron has often spoken), which drifts in large numbers on the surface of African rivers.

But Hercules, while roaming at night on the bank, had been fortunate enough to find a drifting boat. Dick Sand could not hope for anything better, and chance had served him kindly. In fact, it was not one of those narrow boats which the natives generally use.

The perogue found by Hercules was one of those whose length exceeds thirty feet, and the width four--and they are carried rapidly on the waters of the great lakes by the aid of numerous paddles. Mrs. Weldon and her companions could install themselves comfortably in it, and it was sufficient to keep it in the stream by means of an oar to descend the current of the river.

At first, Dick Sand, wishing to pass unseen, had formed a project to travel only at night. But to drift twelve hours out of the twenty-four, was to double the length of a journey which might be quite long. Happily, Dick Sand had taken a fancy to cover the perogue with a roof of long grasses, sustained on a rod, which projected fore and aft. This, when on the water, concealed even the long oar. One

would have said that it was a pile of herbs which drifted down stream, in the midst of floating islets. Such was the ingenious arrangement of the thatch, that the birds were deceived, and, seeing there some grains to pilfer, red-beaked gulls, "arrhinisgas" of black plumage, and gray and white halcyons frequently came to rest upon it.

Besides, this green roof formed a shelter from the heat of the sun. A voyage made under these conditions might then be accomplished almost without fatigue, but not without danger.

In fact, the journey would be a long one, and it would be necessary to procure food each day. Hence the risk of hunting on the banks if fishing would not suffice, and Dick Sand had no firearms but the gun carried off by Hercules after the attack on the ant-hill; but he counted on every shot. Perhaps even by passing his gun through the thatch of the boat he might fire with surety, like a butter through the holes in his hut.

Meanwhile, the perogue drifted with the force of the current a distance not less than two miles an hour, as near as Dick Sand could estimate it.

He hoped to make, thus, fifty miles a day. But, on account of this very rapidity of the current, continual care was necessary to avoid obstacles--rocks, trunks of trees, and the high bottoms of the river. Besides, it was to be feared that this current would change to rapids, or to cataracts, a frequent occurrence on the rivers of Africa.

The joy of seeing Mrs. Weldon and her child had restored all Dick Sand's strength, and he had posted himself in the fore-part of the boat. Across the long grasses, his glance observed the downward course, and, either by voice or gesture, he indicated to Hercules, whose vigorous hands held the oar, what was necessary so as to keep in the right direction.

Mrs. Weldon reclined on a bed of dry leaves in the center of the boat, and grew absorbed in her own thoughts. Cousin Benedict was taciturn, frowning at the sight of Hercules, whom he had not forgiven for his intervention in the affair of the manticore. He dreamed of his lost collection, of his entomological notes, the value of which would not be appreciated by the natives of Kazounde. So he sat, his limbs stretched out, and his arms crossed on his breast, and at times he instinctively made a gesture of raising to his forehead the glasses which his nose did not support. As for little Jack, he understood that he must not make a noise; but, as motion was not forbidden, he imitated his friend Dingo, and ran on his hands and feet from one end of the boat to the other.

During the first two days Mrs. Weldon and her companions used the food that Hercules had been able to obtain before they started. Dick Sand only stopped for a few hours in the night, so as to gain rest. But he did not leave the boat, not wishing to do it except when obliged by the necessity of renewing their provisions.

No incident marked the beginning of the voyage on this unknown river, which measured, at least, more than a hundred and fifty feet in width. Several islets drifted on the surface, and moved with the same rapidity as the boat. So there was no danger of running upon them, unless some obstacle stopped them.

The banks, besides, seemed to be deserted. Evidently these portions of the territory of Kazounde were little frequented by the natives.

Numerous wild plants covered the banks, and relieved them with a profusion of the most brilliant colors. Swallow-wort, iris, lilies, clematis, balsams, umbrella-shaped flowers, aloes, tree-ferns, and spicy shrubs formed a border of incomparable brilliancy. Several forests came to bathe their borders in these rapid waters. Copal-trees, acacias, "bauhinias" of iron-wood, the trunks covered with a dross of lichens on the side exposed to the coldest winds, fig-trees which rose above roots arranged in rows like mangroves, and other trees of magnificent growth, overhung the river. Their high tops, joining a hundred feet above, formed a bower which the solar rays could not penetrate. Often, also, a bridge of lianes was thrown from one bank to the other, and during the 27th little Jack, to his intense admiration, saw a band of monkeys cross one of these vegetable passes, holding each other's tail, lest the bridge should break under their weight.

These monkeys are a kind of small chimpanzee, which in Central Africa has received the name of "sokos." They have low foreheads, clear

yellow faces, and high-set ears, and are very ugly examples of the simiesque race. They live in bands of a dozen, bark like dogs, and are feared by the natives, whose children they often carry off to scratch or bite.

In passing the liane bridge they never suspected that, beneath that mass of herbs which the current bore onward, there was a little boy who would have exactly served to amuse them. The preparations, designed by Dick Sand, were very well conceived, because these clear-sighted beasts were deceived by them.

Twenty miles farther on, that same day, the boat was suddenly stopped in its progress.

"What is the matter?" asked Hercules, always posted at his oar.

"A barrier," replied Dick Sand; "but a natural barrier."

"It must be broken, Mr. Dick."

"Yes, Hercules, and with a hatchet. Several islets have drifted upon it, and it is quite strong."

"To work, captain! to work!" replied Hercules, who came and stood in the fore-part of the perogue.

This barricade was formed by the interlacing of a sticky plant with

glossy leaves, which twists as it is pressed together, and becomes very resisting. They call it "tikatika," and it will allow people to cross watercourses dry-shod, if they are not afraid to plunge twelve inches into its green apron. Magnificent ramifications of the lotus covered the surface of this barrier.

It was already dark. Hercules could, without imprudence, quit the boat, and he managed his hatchet so skilfully that two hours afterward the barrier had given way, the current turned up the broken pieces on the banks, and the boat again took the channel.

Must it be confessed! That great child of a Cousin Benedict had hoped for a moment that they would not be able to pass. Such a voyage seemed to him unnecessary. He regretted Alvez's factory and the hut that contained his precious entomologist's box. His chagrin was real, and indeed it was pitiful to see the poor man. Not an insect; no, not one to preserve!

What, then, was his joy when Hercules, "his pupil" after all, brought him a horrible little beast which he had found on a sprig of the tikatika. Singularly enough the brave black seemed a little confused in presenting it to him.

But what exclamations Cousin Benedict uttered when he had brought this insect, which he held between his index finger and his thumb, as near as possible to his short-sighted eyes, which neither glasses nor microscope could now assist.

"Hercules!" he cried, "Hercules! Ah! see what will gain your pardon! Cousin Weldon! Dick! a hexapode, unique in its species, and of African origin! This, at least, they will not dispute with me, and it shall quit me only with my life!"

"It is, then, very precious?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"Precious!" cried Cousin Benedict. "An insect which is neither a coleopter, nor a neuropteran, nor a hymenopter; which does not belong to any of the ten orders recognized by savants, and which they will be rather tempted to rank in the second section of the arachnides. A sort of spider, which would be a spider if it had eight legs, and is, however, a hexapode, because it has but six. Ah! my friends, Heaven owed me this joy; and at length I shall give my name to a scientific discovery! That insect shall be the 'Hexapodes Benedictus.'"

The enthusiastic savant was so happy--he forgot so many miseries past and to come in riding his favorite hobby--that neither Mrs. Weldon nor Dick Sand grudged him his felicitations.

All this time the perogue moved on the dark waters of the river. The silence of night was only disturbed by the clattering scales of the crocodiles, or the snorting of the hippopotami that sported on the banks.

Then, through the sprigs of the thatch, the moon appeared behind the

tops of the trees, throwing its soft light to the interior of the boat.

Suddenly, on the right bank, was heard a distant hubbub, then a dull noise as if giant pumps were working in the dark.

It was several hundred elephants, that, satiated by the woody roots which they had devoured during the day, came to quench their thirst before the hour of repose. One would really have supposed that all these trunks, lowered and raised by the same automatic movement, would have drained the river dry.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VARIOUS INCIDENTS.

For eight days the boat drifted, carried by the current under the conditions already described. No incident of any importance occurred. For a space of many miles the river bathed the borders of superb forests; then the country, shorn of these fine trees, spread in jungles to the limits of the horizon.

If there were no natives in this country--a fact which Dick Sand did not dream of regretting--the animals at least abounded there. Zebras sported on the banks, elks, and "caamas," a species of antelope which were extremely graceful, and they disappeared at night to give place to the leopards, whose growls could be heard, and even to the lions which bounded in the tall grasses. Thus far the fugitives had not suffered from these ferocious creatures, whether in the forests or in the river.

Meanwhile, each day, generally in the afternoon, Dick Sand neared one bank or the other, moored the boat, disembarked, and explored the shore for a short distance.

In fact, it was necessary to renew their daily food. Now, in this country, barren of all cultivation, they could not depend upon the tapioca, the sorgho, the maize, and the fruits, which formed the

vegetable food of the native tribes. These plants only grew in a wild state, and were not eatable. Dick Sand was thus forced to hunt, although the firing of his gun might bring about an unpleasant meeting.

They made a fire by rubbing a little stick against a piece of the wild fig-tree, native fashion, or even simiesque style, for it is affirmed that certain of the gorillas procure a fire by this means. Then, for several days, they cooked a little elk or antelope flesh. During the 4th of July Dick Sand succeeded in killing, with a single ball, a "pokou," which gave them a good supply of venison. This animal, was five feet long; it had long horns provided with rings, a yellowish red skin, dotted with brilliant spots, and white on the stomach; and the flesh was found to be excellent.

It followed then, taking into account these almost daily landings and the hours of repose that were necessary at night, that the distance on the 8th of July could hot be estimated as more than one hundred miles. This was considerable, however, and already Dick Sand asked himself where this interminable river ended. Its course absorbed some small tributaries and did not sensibly enlarge. As for the general direction, after having been north for a long time, it took a bend toward the northwest.

However, this river furnished its share of food. Long lianes, armed with thorns, which served as fishhooks, caught several of those delicately-flavored "sandjikas", which, once smoked, are easily

carried in this region; black "usakas" were also caught, and some "mormdes," with large heads, the genciva of which have teeth like the hairs of a brush, and some little "dagalas," the friends of running waters, belonging to the clupe species, and resembling the whitebait of the Thames.

During the 9th of July, Dick Sand had to give proof of extreme coolness. He was alone on the shore, carrying off a "caama," the horns of which showed above the thicket. He had just shot it, and now there bounded, thirty feet off, a formidable hunter, that no doubt came to claim its prey, and was not in a humor to give it up. It was a lion of great height, one of those which the natives call "karamos," and not one of the kind without a mane, named "lion of the Nyassi." This one measured five feet in height--a formidable beast. With one bound the lion had fallen on the "caama," which Dick Sand's ball had just thrown to the ground, and, still full of life, it shook and cried under the paw of the powerful animal.

Dick Sand was disarmed, not having had time to slide a second cartridge into his gun.

Dick Sand, in front, lowering his voice, gave directions to avoid striking against these rotten constructions. The night was clear. They saw well to direct the boat, but they could also be seen.

Then came a terrible moment. Two natives, who talked in loud tones, were squatting close to the water on the piles, between which the

current carried the boat, and the direction could not be changed for a narrower pass. Now, would they not see it, and at their cries might not the whole village be alarmed?

A space of a hundred feet at most remained to be passed, when Dick Sand heard the two natives call more quickly to each other. One showed the other the mass of drifting herbs, which threatened to break the long liane ropes which they were occupied in stretching at that moment.

Rising hastily, they called out for help. Five or six other blacks ran at once along the piles and posted themselves on the cross-beams which supported them, uttering loud exclamations which the listeners could not understand.

In the boat, on the contrary, was absolute silence, except for the few orders given by Dick Sand in a low voice, and complete repose, except the movement of Hercules's right arm moving the oar; at times a low growl from Dingo, whose jaws Jack held together with his little hands; outside, the murmur of the water which broke against the piles, then above, the cries of the ferocious cannibals.

The natives, meanwhile, rapidly drew up their ropes. If they were raised in time the boat would pass, otherwise it would be caught, and all would be over with those who drifted in it! As for slackening or stopping its progress, Dick Sand could do neither, for the current, stronger under this narrow construction, carried it forward more

rapidly.

In half a minute the boat was caught between the piles. By an unheard-of piece of fortune, the last effort made by the natives had raised the ropes.

But in passing, as Dick Sand had feared, the boat was deprived of a part of the grasses which now floated at its right.

One of the natives uttered a cry. Had he had time to recognize what the roof covered, and was he going to alarm his comrades? It was more than probable.

Dick Sand and his friends were already out of reach, and in a few moments, under the impetus of this current, now changed into a kind of rapid, they had lost sight of the lacustrine village.

"To the left bank!" Dick Sand ordered, as being more prudent. "The stream is again navigable."

"To the left bank!" replied Hercules, giving the oar a vigorous stroke.

Dick Sand stood beside him and looked at the surface of the water, which the moon lit up. He saw nothing suspicious. Not a boat had started in pursuit. Perhaps these savages had none; and at daybreak not a native appeared, either on the bank or on the water. After that,

increasing their precautions, the boat kept close to the left bank.

During the four following days, from the 11th to the 14th of July, Mrs. Weldon and her companions remarked that this portion of the territory had decidedly changed. It was no longer a deserted country; it was also a desert, and they might have compared it to that Kalahari explored by Livingstone on his first voyage.

The arid soil recalled nothing of the fertile fields of the upper country.

And always this interminable stream, to which might be given the name of river, as it seemed that it could only end at the Atlantic Ocean.

The question of food, in this desert country, became a problem. Nothing remained of their former stock. Fishing gave little; hunting was no longer of any use. Elks, antelopes, pokous, and other animals, could find nothing to live on in this desert, and with them had also disappeared the carnivorous animals.

The nights no longer echoed the accustomed roarings. Nothing broke the silence but the concert of frogs, which Cameron compares with the noise of calkers calking a ship; with riveters who rivet, and the drillers who drill, in a shipbuilder's yard.

The country on the two banks was flat and destitute of trees as far as the most distant hills that bounded it on the east and west. The

spurges grew alone and in profusion--not the euphosbium which produces cassava or tapioca flour, but those from which they draw an oil which does not serve as food.

Meantime it is necessary to provide some nourishment.

Dick Sand knew not what to do, and Hercules reminded him that the natives often eat the young shoots of the ferns and the pith which the papyrus leaf contains. He himself, while following the caravan of Ibn Ilamis across the desert, had been more than once reduced to this expedient to satisfy his hunger. Happily, the ferns and the papyrus grew in profusion along the banks, and the marrow or pith, which has a sweet flavor, was appreciated by all, particularly by little Jack.

This was not a very cheering prospect; the food was not strengthening, but the next day, thanks to Cousin Benedict, they were better served. Since the discovery of the "Hexapodus Benedictus," which was to immortalize his name, Cousin Benedict had recovered his usual manners. The insect was put in a safe place, that is to say, stuck in the crown of his hat, and the savant had recommenced his search whenever they were on shore. During that day, while hunting in the high grass, he started a bird whose warbling attracted him.

Dick Sand was going to shoot it, when Cousin Benedict cried out:

"Don't fire, Dick! Don't fire! A bird among five persons would not be enough."

"It will be enough for Jack," replied Dick Sand, taking aim at the bird, which was in no hurry to fly away.

"No, no!" said Cousin Benedict, "do not fire! It is an indicator, and it will bring us honey in abundance."

Dick Sand lowered his gun, realizing that a few pounds of honey were worth more than one bird; and Cousin Benedict and he followed the bird, which rose and flew away, inviting them to go with it.

They had not far to go, and a few minutes after, some old trunks, hidden in between the spurges, appeared in the midst of an intense buzzing of bees.

Cousin Benedict would have preferred not to have robbed these industrious hymenopters of the "fruit of their labors," as he expressed it. But Dick Sand did not understand it in that way. He smoked out the bees with some dry herbs and obtained a considerable quantity of honey. Then leaving to the indicator the cakes of wax, which made its share of the profit, Cousin Benedict and he returned to the boat.

The honey was well received, but it was but little, and, in fact, all would have suffered cruelly from hunger, if, during the day of the 12th, the boat had not stopped near a creek where some locusts swarmed. They covered the ground and the shrubs in myriads, two or

three deep. Now, Cousin Benedict not failing to say that the natives frequently eat these orthopters--which was perfectly true--they took possession of this manna. There was enough to fill the boat ten times, and broiled over a mild fire, these edible locusts would have seemed excellent even to less famished people. Cousin Benedict, for his part, eat a notable quantity of them, sighing, it is true--still, he eat them.

Nevertheless, it was time for this long series of moral and physical trials to come to an end. Although drifting on this rapid river was not so fatiguing as had been the walking through the first forests near the coast, still, the excessive heat of the day, the damp mists at night, and the incessant attacks of the mosquitoes, made this descent of the watercourse very painful. It was time to arrive somewhere, and yet Dick Sand could see no limit to the journey. Would it last eight days or a month? Nothing indicated an answer. Had the river flowed directly to the west, they would have already reached the northern coast of Angola; but the general direction had been rather to the north, and they could travel thus a long time before reaching the coast.

Dick Sand was, therefore, extremely anxious, when a sudden change of direction took place on the morning of the 14th of July.

Little Jack was in the front of the boat, and he was gazing through the thatch, when a large expanse of water appeared on the horizon.

"The sea!" he shouted.

At this word Dick Sand trembled, and came close to little Jack.

"The sea?" he replied. "No, not yet; but at least a river which flows toward the west, and of which this stream is only a tributary. Perhaps it is the Zaire itself."

"May God grant that is!" replied Mrs. Weldon.

Yes; for if this were the Zaire or Congo, which Stanley was to discover a few years later, they had only to descend its course so as to reach the Portuguese settlements at its mouth. Dick Sand hoped that it might be so, and he was inclined to believe it.

During the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th of July, in the midst of a more fertile country, the boat drifted on the silvery waters of the river. They still took the same precautions, and it was always a mass of herbs that the current seemed to carry on its surface.

A few days more, and no doubt the survivors of the "Pilgrim" would see the termination of their miseries. Self-sacrifice had been shared in by all, and if the young novice would not claim the greater part of it, Mrs. Weldon would demand its recognition for him.

But on the 18th of July, during the night, an incident took place which compromised the safety of the party. Toward three o'clock in the

morning a distant noise, still very low, was heard in the west. Dick Sand, very anxious, wished to know what caused it. While Mrs. Weldon, Jack, and Cousin Benedict slept in the bottom of the boat, he called Hercules to the front, and told him to listen with the greatest attention. The night was calm. Not a breeze stirred the atmosphere.

"It is the noise of the sea," said Hercules, whose eyes shone with joy.

"No," replied Dick Sand, holding down his head.

"What is it then?" asked Hercules.

"Wait until day; but we must watch with the greatest care."

At this answer, Hercules returned to his post.

Dick Sand stood in front, listening all the time. The noise increased. It was soon like distant roaring.

Day broke almost without dawn. About half a mile down the river, just above the water, a sort of cloud floated in the atmosphere. But it was not a mass of vapor, and this became only too evident, when, under the first solar rays, which broke in piercing it, a beautiful rainbow spread from one bank to the other.

"To the shore!" cried Dick Sand, whose voice awoke Mrs. Weldon. "It is

a cataract! Those clouds are spray! To the shore, Hercules!"

Dick Sand was not mistaken. Before them, the bed of the river broke in a descent of more than a hundred feet, and the waters rushed down with superb but irresistible impetuosity. Another half mile, and the boat would have been engulfed in the abyss.

CHAPTER XIX.

S. V.

With a vigorous plow of the oar, Hercules had pushed toward the left bank. Besides, the current was not more rapid in that place, and the bed of the river kept its normal declivity to the falls. As has been said, it was the sudden sinking of the ground, and the attraction was only felt three or four hundred feet above the cataract.

On the left bank were large and very thick trees. No light penetrated their impenetrable curtain. It was not without terror that Dick Sand looked at this territory, inhabited by the cannibals of the Lower Congo, which he must now cross, because the boat could no longer follow the stream. He could not dream of carrying it below the falls. It was a terrible blow for these poor people, on the eve perhaps of reaching the Portuguese villages at its mouth. They were well aided, however. Would not Heaven come to their assistance?

The boat soon reached the left bank of the river. As it drew near, Dingo gave strange marks of impatience and grief at the same time.

Dick Sand, who was watching the animal--for all was danger--asked himself if some beast or some native was not concealed in the high papyrus of the bank. But he soon saw that the animal was not agitated by a sentiment of anger.

"One would say that Dingo was crying!" exclaimed little Jack, clasping Dingo in his two arms.

Dingo escaped from him, and, springing into the water, when the boat was only twenty feet from the bank, reached the shore and disappeared among the bushes.

Neither Mrs. Weldon, nor Dick Sand, nor Hercules, knew what to think.

They landed a few moments after in the middle of a foam green with hairweed and other aquatic plants. Some kingfishers, giving a sharp whistle, and some little herons, white as snow, immediately flew away. Hercules fastened the boat firmly to a mangrove stump, and all climbed up the steep bank overhung by large trees.

There was no path in this forest. However, faint traces on the ground indicated that this place had been recently visited by natives or animals.

Dick Sand, with loaded gun, and Hercules, with his hatchet in his hand, had not gone ten steps before they found Dingo again. The dog, nose to the ground, was following a scent, barking all the time. A first inexplicable presentiment had drawn the animal to this part of the shore, a second led it into the depths of the wood. That was clearly visible to all.

"Attention!" said Dick Sand. "Mrs. Weldon, Mr. Benedict, Jack, do not leave us! Attention, Hercules!"

At this moment Dingo raised its head, and, by little bounds, invited them to follow.

A moment after Mrs. Weldon and her companions rejoined it at the foot of an old sycamore, lost in the thickest part of the wood.

There was a dilapidated hut, with disjoined boards, before which Dingo was barking lamentably.

"Who can be there?" exclaimed Dick Sand.

He entered the hut.

Mrs. Weldon and the others followed him.

The ground was scattered with bones, already bleached under the discoloring action of the atmosphere.

"A man died in that hut!" said Mrs. Weldon.

"And Dingo knew that man!" replied Dick Sand. "It was, it must have been, his master! Ah, see!"

Dick Sand pointed to the naked trunk of the sycamore at the end of the

hut.

There appeared two large red letters, already almost effaced, but which could be still distinguished.

Dingo had rested its right paw on the tree, and it seemed to indicate them.

"S. V.!" exclaimed Dick Sand. "Those letters which Dingo knew among all others! Those initials that it carries on its collar!"

He did not finish, and stooping, he picked up a little copper box, all oxydized, which lay in a corner of the hut.

That box was opened, and a morsel of paper fell from it, on which Dick Sand read these few words:

"Assassinated--robbed by my guide, Negoro--3d December, 1871--here--120 miles from the coast--Dingo!--with me!

"S. VERNON."

The note told everything. Samuel Vernon set out with his dog, Dingo, to explore the center of Africa, guided by Negoro. The money which he carried had excited the wretch's cupidity, and he resolved to take possession of it. The French traveler, arrived at this point of the Congo's banks, had established his camp in this hut. There he was

mortally wounded, robbed, abandoned. The murder accomplished, no doubt Negoro took to flight, and it was then that he fell into the hands of the Portuguese. Recognized as one of the trader Alvez's agents, conducted to Saint Paul de Loanda, he was condemned to finish his days in one of the penitentiaries of the colony. We know that he succeeded in escaping, in reaching New Zealand, and how he embarked on the "Pilgrim" to the misfortune of those who had taken passage on it.
But what happened after the crime? Nothing but what was easy to understand! The unfortunate Vernon, before dying, had evidently had time to write the note which, with the date and the motive of the assassination, gave the name of the assassin. This note he had shut up in that box where, doubtless, the stolen money was, and, in a last effort, his bloody finger had traced like an epitaph the initials of his name. Before those two red letters, Dingo must have remained for many days! He had learned to know them! He could no longer forget them! Then, returned to the coast, the dog had been picked up by the captain of the "Waldeck," and finally, on board the "Pilgrim," found itself again with Negoro. During this time, the bones of the traveler were whitening in the depths of this lost forest of Central Africa, and he no longer lived except in the remembrance of his dog.

Yes, such must have been the way the events had happened. As Dick Sand and Hercules prepared to give a Christian burial to the remains of Samuel Yernon, Dingo, this time giving a howl of rage, dashed out of the hut.

Almost at once horrible cries were heard at a short distance.

Evidently a man was struggling with the powerful animal.

Hercules did what Dingo had done. In his turn he sprang out of the hut, and Dick Sand, Mrs. Weldon, Jack, Benedict, following his steps, saw him throw himself on a man, who fell to the ground, held at the neck by the dog's formidable teeth.

It was Negoro.

In going to the mouth of the Zaire, so as to embark for America, this rascal, leaving his escort behind, had come to the very place where he had assassinated the traveler who had trusted himself to him.

But there was a reason for it, and all understood it when they perceived some handfuls of French gold which glittered in a recently-dug hole at the foot of a tree. So it was evident that after the murder, and before falling into the hands of the Portuguese, Negoro had hidden the product of his crime, with the intention of returning some day to get it. He was going to take possession of this gold when Dingo scented him and sprang at his throat. The wretch, surprised, had drawn his cutlass and struck the dog at the moment when Hercules threw himself on him, crying:

"Ah, villain! I am going to strangle you at last!"

There was nothing more to do. The Portuguese gave no sign of life, struck, it maybe said, by divine justice, and on the very spot where

the crime had been committed. But the faithful dog had received a mortal blow, and dragging itself to the hut, it came to die there--where Samuel Vernon had died.

Hercules buried deep the traveler's remains, and Dingo, lamented by all, was put in the same grave as its master.

Negoro was no more, but the natives who accompanied him from Kazounde could not be far away. On not seeing him return, they would certainly seek him along the river. This was a very serious danger.

Dick Sand and Mrs. Weldon took counsel as to what they should do, and do without losing an instant.

One fact acquired was that this stream was the Congo, which the natives call Kwango, or Ikoutouya Kongo, and which is the Zaire under one longitude, the Loualaba under another. It was indeed that great artery of Central Africa, to which the heroic Stanley has given the glorious name of "Livingstone," but which the geographers should perhaps replace by his own.

But, if there was no longer any doubt that this was the Congo, the French traveler's note indicated that its mouth was still one hundred and twenty miles from this point, and, unfortunately, at this place it was no longer navigable. High falls--very likely the falls of Ntamo--forbid the descent of any boat. Thus it was necessary to follow one or the other bank, at least to a point below the cataracts, either

one or two miles, when they could make a raft, and trust themselves again to the current.

"It remains, then," said Dick Sand, in conclusion, "to decide if we shall descend the left bank, where we are, or the right bank of the river. Both, Mrs. Weldon, appear dangerous to me, and the natives are formidable. However, it seems as if we risk more on this bank, because we have the fear of meeting Negoro's escort."

"Let us pass over to the other bank," replied Mrs. Weldon.

"Is it practicable?" observed Dick Sand. "The road to the Congo's mouths is rather on the left bank, as Negoro was following it. Never mind. We must not hesitate. But before crossing the river with you, Mrs. Weldon, I must know if we can descend it below the falls."

That was prudent, and Dick Sand wished to put his project into execution on the instant.

The river at this place was not more than three or four hundred feet wide, and to cross it was easy for the young novice, accustomed to handling the oar. Mrs. Weldon, Jack, and Cousin Benedict would remain under Hercules's care till his return.

These arrangements made, Dick Sand was going to set out, when Mrs. Weldon said to him:

"You do not fear being carried away by the falls, Dick?"

"No, Mrs. Weldon. I shall cross four hundred feet above."

"But on the other bank--"

"I shall not land if I see the least danger."

"Take your gun."

"Yes, but do not be uneasy about me."

"Perhaps it would be better for us not to separate, Dick," added Mrs. Weldon, as if urged by some presentiment.

"No--let me go alone," replied Dick Sand. "I must act for the security of all. Before one hour I shall be back. Watch well, Hercules."

On this reply the boat, unfastened, carried Dick Sand to the other side of the Zaire.

Mrs. Weldon and Hercules, lying in the papyrus thickets, followed him with their eyes.

Dick Sand soon reached the middle of the stream. The current, without being very strong, was a little accentuated there by the attraction of the falls. Four hundred feet below, the imposing roaring of the waters

filled the space, and some spray, carried by the western wind, reached the young novice. He shuddered at the thought that the boat, if it had been less carefully watched during the last night, would have been lost over those cataracts, that would only have restored dead bodies. But that was no longer to be feared, and, at that moment, the oar skilfully handled sufficed to maintain it in a direction a little oblique to the current.

A quarter of an hour after, Dick Sand had reached the opposite shore, and was preparing to spring on the bank.

At that moment cries were heard, and ten natives rushed on the mass of plants that still hid the boat.

They were the cannibals from the lake village. For eight days they had followed the right bank of the river. Under that thatch, which was torn by the stakes of their village, they had discovered the fugitives, that is to say, a sure prey for them, because the barrier of the falls would sooner or later oblige those unfortunate ones to land on one or the other side of the river.

Dick Sand saw that he was lost, but he asked himself if the sacrifice of his life might not save his companions. Master of himself, standing in the front of the boat, his gun pointed, he held the cannibals in check.

Meanwhile, they snatched away the thatch, under which they expected

to find other victims. When they saw that the young novice alone had fallen into their hands, they betrayed their disappointment by frightful cries. A boy of fifteen among ten!

But, then, one of those natives stood up, his arm stretched toward the left bank, and pointed to Mrs. Weldon and her companions, who, having seen all and not knowing what to do, had just climbed up the bank!

Dick Sand, not even dreaming of himself, waited for an inspiration from Heaven that might save them.

The boat was going to be pushed out into the stream. The cannibals were going to cross the river. They did not budge before the gun aimed at them, knowing the effect of fire-arms. But one of them had seized the oar; he managed it like a man who knew how to use it, and the boat crossed the river obliquely. Soon it was not more than a hundred feet from the left bank.

"Flee!" cried Dick Sand to Mrs. Weldon. "Flee!"

Neither Mrs. Weldon nor Hercules stirred. One would say that their feet were fastened to the ground.

Flee! Besides, what good would it do? In less than an hour they would fall into the hands of the cannibals!

Dick Sand understood it. But, then, that supreme inspiration which he

asked from Heaven was sent him. He saw the possibility of saving all those whom he loved by making the sacrifice of his own life! He did not hesitate to do it.

"May God protect them!" murmured he, "and in His infinite goodness may He have pity on me!"

At the same instant Dick Sand pointed his gun at the native who was steering the boat, and the oar, broken by a ball, flew into fragments.

The cannibals gave a cry of terror.

In fact, the boat, no longer directed by the oar, went with the stream. The current bore it along with increasing swiftness, and, in a few moments, it was only a hundred feet from the falls.

Mrs. Weldon and Hercules understood all. Dick Sand attempted to save them by precipitating the cannibals, with himself, into the abyss. Little Jack and his mother, kneeling on the bank, sent him a last farewell. Hercules's powerless hand was stretched out to him.

At that moment the natives, wishing to gain the left bank by swimming, threw themselves out of the boat, which they capsized.

Dick Sand had lost none of his coolness in the presence of the death which menaced him. A last thought then came to him. It was that this boat, even because it was floating keel upward, might serve to save

him.

In fact, two dangers were to be feared when Dick Sand should be going over the cataract: asphyxia by the water, and asphyxia by the air. Now, this overturned hull was like a box, in which he might, perhaps, keep his head out of the water, at the same time that he would be sheltered from the exterior air, which would certainly have stifled him in the rapidity of his fall. In these conditions, it seems that a man would have some chance of escaping the double asphyxia, even in descending the cataracts of a Niagara.

Dick Sand saw all that like lightning. By a last instinct he clung to the seat which united the two sides of the boat, and, his head out of the water, under the capsized hull, he felt the irresistible current carrying him away, and the almost perpendicular fall taking place.

The boat sank into the abyss hollowed out by the waters at the foot of the cataract, and, after plunging deep, returned to the surface of the river.

Dick Sand, a good swimmer, understood that his safety now depended on the vigor of his arms.

A quarter of an hour after he reached the left bank, and there found Mrs. Weldon, little Jack, and Cousin Benedict, whom Hercules had led there in all haste.

But already the cannibals had disappeared in the tumult of the waters. They, whom the capsized boat had not protected, had ceased to live even before reaching the last depths of the abyss, and their bodies were going to be torn to pieces on those sharp rocks on which the under-current of the stream dashed itself.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

Two days after, the 20th of July, Mrs. Weldon and her companions met a caravan going toward Emboma, at the mouth of the Congo. These were not slave merchants, but honest Portuguese traders, who dealt in ivory. They made the fugitives welcome, and the latter part of the journey was accomplished under more agreeable conditions.

The meeting with this caravan was really a blessing from Heaven. Dick Sand would never have been able to descend the Zaire on a raft. From the Falls of Ntamo, as far as Yellala, the stream was a succession of rapids and cataracts. Stanley counted seventy-two, and no boat could undertake to pass them. It was at the mouth of the Congo that the intrepid traveler, four years later, fought the last of the thirty-two combats which he waged with the natives. Lower down, in the cataracts of Mbelo, he escaped death by a miracle.

On the 11th of August, Mrs. Weldon, Dick Sand, Jack, Hercules, and Cousin Benedict arrived at Emboma. Messrs. Motta Viega and Harrison received them with generous hospitality. A steamer was about sailing for the Isthmus of Panama. Mrs. Weldon and her companions took passage in it, and happily reached the American coast.

A despatch sent to San Francisco informed Mr. Weldon of the

unlooked-for return of his wife and his child. He had vainly searched for tidings of them at every place where he thought the "Pilgrim" might have been wrecked.

Finally, on the 25th of August, the survivors of the shipwreck reached the capital of California. Ah! if old Tom and his companions had only been with them!

What shall we say of Dick Sand and of Hercules? One became the son, the other the friend, of the family. James Weldon knew how much he owed to the young novice, how much to the brave black. He was happy; and it was fortunate for him that Negoro had not reached him, for he would have paid the ransom of his wife and child with his whole fortune. He would have started for the African coast, and, once there, who can tell to what dangers, to what treachery, he would have been exposed?

A single word about Cousin Benedict. The very day of his arrival the worthy savant, after having shaken hands with Mr. Weldon, shut himself up in his study and set to work, as if finishing a sentence interrupted the day before. He meditated an enormous work on the "Hexapodes Benedictus," one of the desiderata of entomological science.

There, in his study, lined with insects, Cousin Benedict's first action was to find a microscope and a pair of glasses. Great heaven! What a cry of despair he uttered the first time he used them to study

the single specimen furnished by the African entomology!

The "Hexapodes Benedictus" was not a hexapode! It was a common spider! And if it had but six legs, instead of eight, it was simply because the two front legs were missing! And if they were missing, these two legs, it was because, in taking it, Hercules had, unfortunately, broken them off! Now, this mutilation reduced the pretended "Hexapodes Benedictus" to the condition of an invalid, and placed it in the most ordinary class of spiders--a fact which Cousin Benedict's near-sightedness had prevented him from discovering sooner. It gave him a fit of sickness, from which, however, he happily recovered.

Three years after, little Jack was eight years old, and Dick Sand made him repeat his lessons, while working faithfully at his own studies. In fact, hardly was he at home when, realizing how ignorant he was, he had commenced to study with a kind of remorse--like a man who, for want of knowledge, finds himself unequal to his task.

"Yes," he often repeated; "if, on board of the 'Pilgrim,' I had known all that a sailor should know, what misfortunes we would have escaped!"

Thus spoke Dick Sand. At the age of eighteen he finished with distinction his hydrographical studies, and, honored with a brevet by special favor, he took command of one of Mr. Weldon's vessels.

See what the little orphan, rescued on the beach at Sandy Hook, had

obtained by his work and conduct. He was, in spite of his youth, surrounded by the esteem, one might say the respect, of all who knew him; but his simplicity and modesty were so natural to him, that he was not aware of it. He did not even suspect--although no one could attribute to him what are called brilliant exploits--that the firmness, courage, and fidelity displayed in so many trials had made of him a sort of hero.

Meanwhile, one thought oppressed him. In his rare leisure hours he always dreamed of old Tom, of Bat, of Austin, and of Acteon, and of the misfortune for which he held himself responsible. It was also a subject of real grief to Mrs. Weldon, the actual situation of her former companions in misery. Mr. Weldon, Dick Sand, and Hercules moved heaven and earth to find traces of them. Finally they succeeded--thanks to the correspondents which the rich shipowner had in different parts of the world. It was at Madagascar--where, however, slavery was soon to be abolished--that Tom and his companions had been sold. Dick Sand wished to consecrate his little savings to ransom them, but Mr. Weldon would not hear of it. One of his correspondents arranged the affair, and one day, the 15th of November, 1877, four blacks rang the bell of his house.

They were old Tom, Bat, Acteon, and Austin. The brave men, after escaping so many dangers, came near being stifled, on that day, by their delighted friends.

Only poor Nan was missing from those whom the "Pilgrim" had thrown on

the fatal coast of Africa. But the old servant could not be recalled to life, and neither could Dingo be restored to them. Certainly it was miraculous that these two alone had succumbed amid such adventures.

It is unnecessary to say that on that occasion they had a festival at the house of the California merchant. The best toast, which all applauded, was that given by Mrs. Weldon to Dick Sand, "To the Captain at Fifteen!"

THE END.

End of the Voyage Extraordinaire